

# INDIAN SUPERSTITION



Amos H. Cannon



# Indian Superstition





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## Indian Superstition.

Cushioned on golden clouds, there are, who sail,  
And elate in splendour, ride the summer gale,  
Who sweep the atmosphere in painted wings,  
Dwell their rich music, & adore their king;  
Whose silens later at sombre twilight play  
A soft farewell to all the pride of day.  
Not these we seek,—yet from its cavern low,  
The fair would pluck the lock of Prospero,  
Which sterner Spirits hold communion high,  
And scan their natures with adventurous eye.)

Thus over the East where boundless Ocean smiles,  
And greets the wanderer to his thousand isles,  
Dishonoured India clanks her sullen chain,  
And waits her desolation to the main.  
To her dark land the banded fiends resort,  
And Superstition crowns his haggard court.  
The bloated monster gluts his hellish brood,  
Gorging his banquet with the people's blood.  
Lo! on the wind the shrieks of anguish ring,  
From victims writhing to his lion fang.

Lines 1-20 of Emerson's poem for the Harvard College Exhibition  
of Tuesday, April 24, 1821



# Indian Superstition

BY RALPH WALDO EMERSON

EDITED WITH

A Dissertation on Emerson's  
Orientalism at Harvard by

KENNETH WALTER CAMERON



The Friends of the Dartmouth Library

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TO CARL FERDINAND STRAUCH

who best knows Emerson's poetry



# Foreword

THROUGH the courtesy of John L. Cooley, Esq., of Pleasantville, New York, a friend of Dartmouth and one of the Friends of the Dartmouth Library, we are permitted to publish for the first time an Emerson poem, "Indian Superstition," written 132 years ago as an assignment for the Harvard College Exhibition of April 24, 1821. Once believed to be irrecoverably lost, Mr. Cooley's manuscript appears to be the poet's final draft, stitched with black thread, probably by his mother. (The family has kept alive a tradition that Ruth Emerson regularly sewed the college papers of her sons.) Another manuscript of this poem must at one time have belonged to Harvard College, for the early regulations required all participants in public exercises to deposit a neat transcript of their lines with the president before performance. Emerson's fair copy, however, if submitted under the rule, cannot now be located. The little quarto gathering to be edited in the following pages has, therefore, the honor of keeping alive the evidence of Emerson's earliest reading in East Indian lore and of evoking, for literary historians and students of human culture, a new chapter on the Orient in American letters. Ralph was only seventeen when he completed his poem on April 14, 1821, and was doubtless proud

to receive for it a ten-dollar faculty award, immediately credited to his term bill.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Cooley secured the manuscript from Goodspeed's Book Shop in Boston about a decade ago, that firm having previously bought it from a descendant of the Haskins family—Ruth Emerson's people—among whom it had been passed down for nearly five generations.

In behalf of the Friends of the Dartmouth Library, I wish to thank Edward W. Forbes, Esq., Emerson's grandson and president of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Memorial Association, for his permission to publish "Indian Superstition" and thirteen lines of its precursor, the Pythologian poem "Improvement." Professor William A. Jackson of the Houghton Library at Harvard gave important help when it was needed. George William Adams, Esq., reference librarian at Trinity College, assisted cheerfully with interlibrary loans. The project, moreover, from its inception has been supervised by both Mr. Cooley and Professor Herbert Faulkner West, secretary of the Friends of the Dartmouth Library and general chairman of their publications.

K. W. C.

*Trinity College*  
*Hartford, Connecticut*  
*May, 1953*

<sup>1</sup> See the "Account of Exhibitions given instead of Waiterships, 1820-1821" and the Bursar's records, both in the Harvard University Archives.



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# Indian Superstition



# Young Emerson's Orientalism at Harvard

NEW ENGLAND'S first direct contact with India was probably established by wealthy Boston shipowners, who built their villas in Dorchester or Brookline and filled them with bric-a-brac, plaster casts, and teakwood chests. The exploits and reports of these East India merchants contributed more than is commonly suspected to American curiosity regarding the Orient, its strange customs, and its philosophy—though literature was eventually required to sustain it. By the 1790's, books began to reach Boston from the printing presses of Calcutta, especially the works of Sir William Jones and the *Transactions* of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, of which he was president.<sup>1\*</sup> As early as January 27, 1795, the Massachusetts Historical Society elected that hero a corresponding member and wrote on February 7: "Your character, and the attention which the world allows you to have paid to learning have induced us to pursue such measures as we hope will obtain your good wishes."<sup>2</sup> Although Jones had died nine months before the letter was mailed, the liaison between New England historians and oriental researchers was, nonetheless, effected. It is highly probable that the Reverend William Emerson, who joined the Society

\* Footnotes appear at the end of this dissertation, pp. 38-47.

shortly after moving to Boston in 1799, shared with English and New England clergymen the hope that oriental studies might eventually throw new light on the Hebrew scriptures, for as Richard Watson<sup>3</sup> had said in his address to the clergy of the Archdeaconry of Ely on May 9-10, 1780, "it is a mortifying reflection, that we know very little of the history of the human race." Since the recognized antiquity of the available Indian annals seemed to militate against the Mosaic history, and since "the Gentoo scriptures" made "no mention of the deluge," and since the "Bramins" affirmed "that the deluge never took place in Indostan," was it not important for Christian scholars to translate *all* the Indian scriptures and, if possible, find the corroboration they desired? He and his fellows were disturbed by science and hoped somehow to counteract the opinion of the great Linnaeus "that whatever marks there may be of a slow and almost insensible conversion of sea, into dry land, there are none of a deluge any where to be found."<sup>4</sup>

The Orient was much discussed by the literati of the Anthology Club,<sup>5</sup> which the Reverend William Emerson formed in Boston in 1804, shortly after becoming editor of the *Monthly Anthology and Boston Review*.<sup>6</sup> In January, the periodical had printed M. M. Clifford's "Asia, an Elegy,"<sup>7</sup> describing the miserable condition of society in India. In July, 1805, appeared Act I of Sir William Jones's translation from the Sanskrit *Sakuntala*<sup>8</sup> by Calidasa, the "oriental Shakespeare"—possibly the first Hindu work to be printed in the United States. Then followed a review of Lord Teignmouth's *Memoirs of the Life, Writings and Correspondence of Sir William Jones*;<sup>9</sup> a review of Charles Grant's *A Poem on the Restoration of Learning in the East*;<sup>10</sup> and "Bibliographical Notices of Harvard College Library—Oriental Literature,"<sup>11</sup>—the last by Thaddeus Mason Harris. This periodical, the predecessor of the *North American Review*, was



Moses with Three of the Hindoos, Northumberland, 1799. (See margin & . 24 infra.)

read during his college years by Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Romanticism in England was approaching full flood when the Reverend William Emerson died on May 12, 1811, leaving in his library a file of the *Monthly Anthology*, a number of contemporary religious periodicals containing references to the Orient, and several significant books. The volumes listed on the broadside for the auctioneer's sale of August 27, 1822,<sup>12</sup> included Teignmouth's *Memoirs of . . . Jones* and the *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah [Zaarmilla]* written previous to, and during the period of his residence in England.<sup>13</sup> The latter was the sort of popular and informative work which the Emerson family read at the hearth, and it was typical of the literary and homiletical works issued or reissued between 1790 and 1821 for circulation in Boston in having a treatise or appendix "on the history, religion, and manners of the Hindoos." At least one edition of Luiz de Camões, *The Lusiad; or The Discovery of India*, in the popular translation of William Julius Mickle, also offered a lengthy "Enquiry into the Religious Tenets and Philosophy of the Brahmins."<sup>14</sup> Robert Southey's *The Curse of Kehama* avoided the preliminary dissertation but instead crowded into its voluminous notes choice extracts from more than forty rich oriental sources.<sup>15</sup> Even preachers of the period were fond of attaching informative expositions and documents to their published sermons, as is illustrated by Samuel Nott, Jr., who in *A Sermon on the Idolatry of the Hindoos* (delivered Nov. 29, 1816, at Franklin, Conn.)<sup>16</sup> constructed an appendix out of passages from Southey's notes and many other standard oriental treatises. Published before Ralph Waldo Emerson entered Harvard, this, like the other works mentioned, helps attest to the prevailing romantic and missionary climate of opinion—an interest in the faraway and in the primitive—apparent in his reading and in his journals of the college years.<sup>17</sup> For fuller insight

Portuguese spelling: Camões  
English spelling: Camoëns

The Emersons borrowed from the B.L.S. on Dec. 19, 1812, and returned Dec. 24;

William Tennant, *Indian Recreations*, consisting chiefly of strictures on the do-

Claudius Buchanan:

Memoir of the Expediency of an Ecclesiastical Establishment for British India; both as the means of perpetuating the Christian Religion among our own countrymen; and as a foundation for the ultimate civilization of the natives. (1st American ed.), Cambridge, [Mass.], 1811.

(Photostats of rich appendices in my folder:)


Record of the superstitious practices of the Hindoos....

Notes on the practicability of abolishing those practices of the Hindoos, which inflict immediate death, or tend to produce death....

Report of the number of women who have burned themselves on the funeral pile of their husbands within thirty miles round Calcutta....

Religious mendicants  
etc. etc.

laudius Buchanan, Christian Researches in Asia: with Notices of the Translation of the Scriptures into the Oriental Languages. London, 1811. Contains inter alia the following chapters:

- 
- "The Hindoos" (17ff.)
  - "Juggernaut" (19ff.)
  - "Immolation of Females" (39ff.)
  - "Hindoo Infanticide" (46ff.)
  - "A List of Works on the  
Civilization of the East;  
being compositions which  
gained the Prizes, or were  
presented to the Universities  
in competition for the Prizes,  
instituted by Dr. Buchanan"  
(297ff.)

[In my library.]



into the *Zeitgeist*, the researcher ought to study the early lists of book holdings of the Boston Library Society, the Boston Athenaeum, and Harvard University, especially the "Systematic Index" of the last-mentioned collection, prepared in 1830 by Benjamin Peirce.<sup>18</sup>

Emerson's residence at Harvard coincided with the stirring of the literary mind of Boston by oriental breezes. *The Christian Disciple and the Theological Review* (1813–1823),<sup>19</sup> forerunner of the *Christian Examiner*, reprinted Sir William Jones's "On the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India" and carried articles entitled "Human Sacrifices Offered to the Ganges" and "A Remarkable Hindoo Reformer [Rammohun Roy]."<sup>20</sup> The *North American Review*, begun in 1815, carried, among others, William Tudor's "Theology of the Hindoos as taught by Ram Mohun Roy" and Theophilus Parsons' "Manners and Customs of India."<sup>21</sup> These journals young Emerson read as published, together with occasional volumes of the *Christian Observer* of London, in which were discussed Rammohun Roy's activities, the "duty to Christianize India," and the works of Claudius Buchanan.<sup>22</sup> He examined even more faithfully, however, both the current and early volumes of the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Quarterly Review*,<sup>23</sup> which furnished him with nearly twenty articles on India and a considerable body of Eastern lore overlooked by students of his orientalism.<sup>24</sup>

That Harvard University in Emerson's day was strongly conscious of India, the rich bibliographical article in the *Monthly Anthology* (1808), cited above,<sup>25</sup> will conclusively prove. Its final paragraph recommended "to the youth, who are fond of oriental literature, the *Asiatick Miscellany*, the *Ayeen Akbery* translated by Gladwin, the *Forms of Herkern* by Balfour, the *Poems of Ferdosi* by Champion, the *Institutes of Menu*, and, above all, the *Works* of Sir William Jones, *vir omni ingenio peditus, et omni laude dignus*."<sup>26</sup>

In April, 1811, David Irving of Edinburgh presented to the college library a copy of Thomas Brown's *The Renovation of India, a Poem. With the Prophecy of the Ganges, an Ode* (Edinburgh, 1808)—interesting not only for its orientalism but also for two critical essays, one of which condemned the shackles of regular versification and justified a degree of spontaneity in the poet—bursts of “wild imagery and sudden passions of prophecy.” (Emerson was to be attracted by these opinions during his junior year at Harvard, though his neoclassical conservatism obliged him to renounce them.) One of the popular college textbooks which fulfilled the sophomore requirement of “modern history and chronology” stressed the superstitious nature of Indian religion—Lord Woodhouselee's *Elements of General History*.<sup>27</sup> Dugald Stewart's *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, required in the curriculum of the junior and senior years, called attention in its appended notes to the similarities and contrasts between Bishop George Berkeley's Ideal Theory and the transcendentalism of the Brahmins, quoting from Sir William Jones and citing his “Hymn to Narayena.”<sup>28</sup> The Harvard Campus, moreover, was aware of the value in the “oriental theme” for essays and verses, and when, on March 7, 1821,<sup>29</sup> the faculty assigned Emerson “A Poem. ‘Indian Superstition’—100 lines” for the Exhibition on the following April 24,<sup>30</sup> it doubtless had in mind the outstanding and easily available English “prize poem” on this subject written by Charles Grant, fellow of Magdalen College, Cambridge. In 1804 the Reverend Claudius Buchanan, Vice Provost of the College of Fort William in Bengal, had stimulated oriental research among the students of that British university by giving £210 to be divided among the best contributors in each of the following classes: (a) an English prose dissertation “On the Best Means of Civilizing the Subjects of the British Empire in India, and of Diffusing the Light of the



Christian Religion throughout the Eastern World"; (b) an English poem "On the Restoration of Learning in the East"; (c) a Latin poem on "Collegium Bengalense"; (d) a Greek ode on "ΓΕΝΕΣΘΩ ΦΩΣ."<sup>31</sup> Grant's little book on the second topic was published by the University of Cambridge in at least two editions,<sup>32</sup> and Massachusetts reprinted it almost immediately,<sup>33</sup> thereby guaranteeing a circulation in Boston and Cambridge libraries.<sup>34</sup> Writing Mary Moody Emerson on April 7, 1821,<sup>35</sup> and urging her to be present at the Exhibition to be held two weeks later, "Waldo the Poet" was conscious of her interest in the Orient and of his own achievement in the prize-winning tradition which Charles Grant had established. Apparently it was also with her wide reading in mind that he gave his aunt the title of "Inhabitant of Hamilton, [Massachusetts,] (or rather the World)."

Assuming this interesting and necessary background and the *Zeitgeist*, we must now deal with Emerson's specific preparation for his Indian poem. In compiling his "Dissertation on the Comparative Merits of Ancient and Modern Historians," completed in June, 1818, and submitted without success for the Bowdoin Prize,<sup>36</sup> he cited and apparently examined William Robertson's *An Historical Disquisition Concerning the Knowledge which the Ancients Had of India*.<sup>37</sup> Like so many other publications in this period, Robertson's work had a rich appendix "on the civil policy, the laws, and . . . religious institutions of the Indians," in which he wrote:<sup>38</sup>

As superstition and false religion take their rise, in every country, from nearly the same sentiments and apprehensions, the invisible beings, who are the first objects of veneration, have every where a near resemblance. To conceive an idea of one superintending mind, capable of arranging and directing all the various operations of nature, seems to be an attainment far



beyond the powers of man in the more early stages of his progress. . . . He fancies that it is the province of one deity to point the lightning, and, with an awful sound, to hurl the irresistible thunderbolt at the head of the guilty; that another rides in the whirlwind, and, at his pleasure, raises or stills the tempest; that a third rules over the ocean; that a fourth is the god of battles; that while malevolent powers scatter the seeds of animosity and discord, and kindle in the breast those angry passions which give rise to war, and terminate in destruction, others, of a nature more benign, by inspiring the hearts of men with kindness and love, strengthen the bonds of social union, augment the happiness, and increase the number, of the human race.

Then, during one week beginning August 29, 1818, Emerson read Thomas Duer Broughton's *Selections from the Popular Poetry of the Hindoos*,<sup>39</sup> with its appended notes, which gave him glimpses of the attractiveness of Indian life as described in early Hindu literature—the view of a paradise he was later to recall in lines 103-110 of his poem. For six weeks—from December 12, 1818, until the following February—Emerson and his family read Hugh Pearson's celebrated *Memoirs of the Rev. Claudius Buchanan*.<sup>40</sup> Between September 2 and 4, 1819, when he was about to enter his junior year, he studied Volume I of Lord Woodhouselee's *Considerations on the Present Political State of India*, which dealt with the causes of delinquency and depravity among the orientals, and the oppressive treatment of the lower orders by the Brahmins.<sup>41</sup> In March, 1820, he examined Volume I of *The Asiatick Miscellany*<sup>42</sup> (recommended on the early library list), containing the Indian hymns translated by Sir William Jones—notably the "Hymn to Narayena" with its extensive introduction—and also works of Sadi, Hafiz, and Jami; preadamite fables and antediluvian tales; early Hindu histories, besides descriptions of India and

achism

voyages to the Orient. This collection must have provided a rich stimulus for all his future studies in the East. In early April, moreover, he was much moved by Southey's review, "British Monasticism,"<sup>43</sup> which surveyed "the most disgusting actions of insane and grovelling superstition" among early Egyptian Christians with occasional asides on the practices of the Hindus. Emerson read with fascination but disapproval about the "freaks and follies of the human mind" and the "diseases of the moral and intellectual nature" which early ascetics manifested, ranging from the behavior of those who acted like beasts, crawled on all fours, and considered a bath an abomination, to those who "resembled the Yoguees of Hindostan," who took lodgings in the stews, and who threw modesty to the winds—the "rank weeds of the Egyptian soil." Emerson, who was at this time also collecting material for his Bowdoin Prize dissertation on "The Character of Socrates,"<sup>44</sup> indicated in his notes the obvious contrast between the simple yet rigorous self-discipline of his manly Greek hero and the obvious psychopathy of the monks and their Eastern brothers. Socrates never manifested "anything like that excess of Indian superstition which worships God by outraging nature. . . . Human nature wants no such champions."<sup>45</sup> Southey had pointed out the parallel between the monkish eagerness for torment in the hope of increasing spiritual merit and the fanaticism of the Indian pilgrims who cast themselves in front of the ruthless Juggernaut. A few months later Emerson was to encounter the same false religion in Southey's Kehama, the "man-almighty" (line 142) grasping at destiny through unusual acts of penance.

The article was still in his mind, moreover, when during the spring of 1820 he completed his poem, "Improvement," delivered in April of that year before the Pythologian Society at Harvard.<sup>46</sup> The hint for both its theme and structure



he drew from the following passage in Southey, which he summarized in his journals:<sup>47</sup>

Superstition has always lost something of its grossness as it proceeded from east to west. The mythology of Egypt was less grotesque and monstrous than that of Hindostan,—the mythology of Greece less so than that of Egypt. And thus, in later times, the Stylitae, and the other heroes of the desert, fell as much short of the Hindoo penitents in their extravagancies and practices of self-torture, as they exceeded their followers in Europe.

According to Emerson's Pythologian exercise, Improvement (capitalized because an abstraction) seems to have begun her march in Greece and Rome and then, with Columbus, moved westward. England (also called "Albion") soon gained world ascendancy and then sent the enlightened lady to India. The rough draft mentions Egypt in some connection and, in describing Columbus' fated discovery of new lands, implies that Improvement chose for her final headquarters Emerson's own beloved America. The latest revision of the poem does not survive, but I am confident that it was much better organized than the journal fragments and that the United States was, indeed, the westward point toward which the march was being conducted. The letter to Charles on April 21, 1820, implies as much when it describes the subject as wavering between the theme of progress and that of "the course of Empire"—an obvious reference to Bishop Berkeley's famous lines about America.<sup>48</sup>

The Muse, disgusted at an age and clime,  
Barren of every glorious theme,  
In distant lands now waits a better time,  
Producing subjects worthy fame:  
In happy climes, where from the genial sun  
And virgin earth such scenes ensue,  
The force of art by nature seems outdone,  
And fancied beauties by the true:

See Arthur Kay, *The Epic Intent and the American Dream: The  
Weathering Theme in American Poetry*

In happy climes the seat of innocence,  
Where nature guides and virtue rules,  
Where men shall not impose for truth and sense,  
The pedantry of courts and schools:

There shall be sung another golden age,  
The rise of empire and of arts,  
The good and great inspiring epic rage,  
The wisest heads and noblest hearts.

Not such as Europe breeds in her decay;  
Such as she bred when fresh and young,  
When heavenly flame did animate her clay,  
By future poets shall be sung.

Westward the course of empire takes its way;  
The four first acts already past,  
A fifth shall close the drama with the day;  
Time's noblest offspring is the last.

All Emerson's early patriotic poems show an indebtedness to Berkeley's vision as well as to his verses, which are echoed in the following passage from "Improvement."<sup>49</sup> Herein one also finds a small portion of "Indian Superstition" (lines 45-49), conceived a year before the Exhibition of April 24, 1821.

Oer climes oer ages Empire holds his way  
Still [canceled] westward where Destiny's  
strange pathway lay  
The island Queen [*i.e.*, England] recieves [*sic*]  
the mystic power  
And stalls like coursers in her Ocean bower  
In Albion long the Chariot has delayed  
And Fate enlarged the glorious gift she made  
She bid her throw the chain of empire round  
Oer lands which Roman triumph never found.  
And bid Improvement rise on Indian plains  
That land of woe & of romantic strains



There in devotion to mysterious powers  
The Indian stands in Ganges holy bowers  
On the hot sands where human nature fails  
&c

After putting his Pythologian poem into final form in April, 1820—with or without the above references to superstitious India—he succeeded, by the following July 21, in completing his dissertation on Socrates, which referred to one “act” in Berkeley’s historic “drama” of the race and echoed the familiar subjects of superstition, modern improvement, human progress, and the world of the East Indies where nature was still being outraged for the worship of God. And Emerson contrasted the “common-sense” temperament of Socrates with the opposite one of the poet, who, amidst “golden dreams,—airy nothings, bright personifications of glory and joy and evil,” one can imagine “sitting apart, like Brahma, moulding magnificent forms, clothing them with beauty and grandeur.”<sup>50</sup> About this same time, he became familiar with the colorful episode of Nala and Damayanti from the *Mahábhárat*.<sup>51</sup>

When his senior year at Harvard opened in the fall of 1820, he was resolved to try once more for the Bowdoin Prize by writing on the present state of ethical speculation. The curriculum of the final year was richly philosophical, the principal textbooks being Paley’s *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, Bishop Joseph Butler’s *Analogy of Religion to the Constitution and Course of Nature*, and the important second volume of Stewart’s *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*. In the last, Emerson was introduced, probably for the first time, to parallels and contrasts between Berkeleian and Hindu Idealism, which were in later years to increase his respect for oriental thought and cause him to overlook its “superstition.” For the moment, Berkeley’s philosophy<sup>52</sup>—not yet the Hindu—fascinated him,

and he pursued that interest by reading Sir William Drummond's *Academical Questions*, an excellent handbook in metaphysical matters.<sup>53</sup> Then, shortly before Christmas, 1820, he came upon two significant reviews—"Maurice's *India*" and "Teignmouth's *Life of Sir William Jones*,"<sup>54</sup> the second of which led him eventually to the *Life* itself.<sup>55</sup> About February 10, 1821, he started composing a theme for Professor Edward Tyrrel Channing—"Influences of Weather on Intellectual Temperament"—using as principal illustration the distressed and superstitious inhabitants of "Indostan," whose burning sun and strange skies made them fierce and brutal.<sup>56</sup> On February 24,<sup>57</sup> he took from the library Volume IV of the *Monthly Anthology and Boston Review*, which was to be important to him. One may surmise that critical considerations led him to it. I think the two articles on alliteration<sup>58</sup> which he found in it largely account for the excessive use of this device in his poem. He may, indeed, have sought the long and interesting review of Joseph Priestley's *Memoirs*,<sup>59</sup> and doubtless noted with appreciation, in passing, the short article on Spenser and Dante<sup>60</sup> and the "Song of a Runic Bard," which was to haunt his mind and express itself as a poetic theme as long as he lived.<sup>61</sup> I am inclined to believe, however, that he wanted specifically the review of the Salem edition of Grant's *Poem on the Restoration of Learning in the East*, which led him almost immediately to the important prize work itself.<sup>62</sup> This and *The Curse of Kehama*,<sup>63</sup> which he studied while he composed his lines for the Exhibition, completed his preparation. In Southey's notes he found gems like the following,<sup>64</sup> the first of which is echoed in his second Bowdoin Prize essay.

The soul itself is its own witness; the soul itself is its own refuge; offend not thy conscious soul, the supreme internal witness of men! . . . The sinful have said in their hearts, none see us. Yes, the gods distinctly see them, and so does the spirit within their



breasts. . . . The guardian deities of the firmament, of the earth, of the waters, of the human heart, of the moon, of the sun, and of fire, of punishment after death, of the winds, of night, of both twilights, and of justice, perfectly know the state of all spirits clothed with bodies. . . . O friend to virtue! that supreme Spirit, *which thou believest one and the same with thyself*, resides in thy bosom perpetually, and is an all-knowing inspector of thy goodness or of thy wickedness. . . . If thou beest not at variance, by speaking falsely, with Yama, the subduer of all, with Vaivaswata the punisher, with that great Divinity who dwells in thy breast,—go not on a pilgrimage to the river Ganga, nor to the plains of Curu, for thou hast no need of expiation. [*Institutes of Menu*, tr. Jones, ch. viii]

I am the creation and the dissolution of the whole universe. There is not any thing greater than I, and all things hang on me, even as precious gems upon a string. I am moisture in the water, light in the sun and moon, invocation in the *Veds*, sound in the firmament, human nature in mankind, sweet-smelling savour in the earth, glory in the source of light: In all things I am life; and I am zeal in the zealous; and know, O Arjoon! that I am the eternal seed of all nature. I am the understanding of the wise, the glory of the proud, the strength of the strong, free from lust and anger; and in animals I am desire regulated by moral fitness. [Krishna in the *Bhagavadgita*]

From such revealing scriptures as these, Emerson was soon to pass to Frederick Schlegel's *Lectures*<sup>65</sup> and to "Essay II" in Dugald Stewart's *Philosophical Essays*.<sup>66</sup>

"Indian Superstition" ought briefly to be considered with Emerson's three other didactic poems which preceded it.<sup>67</sup> All are written in heroic couplets and observe the conventions of the Age of Pope.<sup>68</sup> All are filled with abstractions, and all are pro-American and antidespotic.<sup>69</sup> In "Washington" (1814),<sup>70</sup> which is anti-British, Israel's God raises up a hero in whose eye Columbia's lightning glitters and around whose awful head are Guardian Angels.<sup>71</sup> His shield, "Glory," gives Columbia her independence by putting to

flight Albion's hosts. In "Independence" (1815),<sup>72</sup> the same theme is developed. The enemy is Ambition, who attempts to subjugate the world in different historical epochs in the persons of Xerxes, Philip of Macedon, Catiline, Britannia (Albion),<sup>73</sup> and Napoleon.<sup>74</sup> Independence, however, descends from Heaven and animates the Greeks, Demosthenes, Cicero, Washington, and Alexander of Russia in turn to crush their foes. Emerson here employed the same imagery regarding Washington as in the earlier poem. Since I have already discussed elements in the structure of the still-unpublished third poem ("Improvement"), I shall add only that its opening, as we now have it in the rough draft, deals with the Muse, or Poesy, who desires to sing of better times—an obvious expansion of Bishop Berkeley's first stanza. Emerson toys with the idea that improvement in poetry might seem to require breaking the fetters or shackles of rhyme, but he quickly asserts that tradition is too strong to tolerate such a change.<sup>75</sup> Abstractions<sup>76</sup> abound in these later verses, and we are therefore prepared for a large number in "Indian Superstition" as well as for the familiar intention "to elevate Columbian glory."<sup>77</sup>

Grant's *Restoration of Learning in the East*, one of the two principal influences on Emerson's Exhibition poem, provides the reader with an excellent survey of Hindu history, deities, and religious customs. Its influence upon Emerson extended to matters of diction and imagery, even to format, but especially to structure and major themes. Grant's preliminary statement follows:<sup>78</sup>

1. The *first* part of the poem describes the degraded state of Hindoo literature during the latter part of the last century. The shocks which learning sustained from the persecuting bigotry of Aurungzebe, the irruption of Nadir Shah, and the intestine divisions to which that irruption gave rise, are particularly noticed.
2. A transition is then made to the ancient splendor of Hindoo



literature during the period when India was governed by her native kings. The earliest age of authentic Indian history is brought into review; some account is given of the poetry and philosophy of Vyasa, which distinguished succeeding times; and this part closes with a reference to the last brilliant era of India, when the poet Calidasa flourished.

3. *Lastly*, The revival of learning on the banks of the Ganges, under the auspices of the English, and particularly of the Asiatic Society, is celebrated. The poem concludes with anticipating the diffusion of the arts, the sciences, and the religion of Great Britain, throughout the East.

Grant supplied Emerson<sup>79</sup> with colorful descriptions of India's golden age—her Garden-of-Eden epoch—in the Vale of Cashmere.<sup>80</sup>

Oh, once for thee [Cashmere] the rosy-finger'd Hours  
120 Wove wreaths of joy in Pleasure's echoing bowers;  
Once round thy limpid stream and scented grove,  
The haunts of Fancy, Freedom lov'd to rove;  
And, moulded by the hand of young Desire,  
Thy daughters shone amid the virgin choir:  
125 Not fair Circassia touch'd her blooming race  
With tints so tender of impassion'd grace;  
With all their glances wove such artless wiles,  
Or breath'd such brightness round their angel smiles.

. . . . .

345 Hail, happy years! when every lyre was strung,  
And every clime with mirth and music rung.  
While Asia's voice her Calidasa blest,  
Hark! kindred spirits answer'd from the West.  
There all his lofty tones Lucretius gave,  
350 And epic transports burst on Mincio's wave,  
While rov'd the Matin bee o'er sweetest flowers,  
And all Hymettus bloom'd in Tibur's bowers.  
Oh, could some God have rent the veil away,  
And join'd in one the masters of the lay!

In the middle section, Grant summarized Hindu philosophy, set forth particulars concerning the *Bhagavadgita*, and identified Vyasa's Idealism with Berkeley's. Of these matters, Emerson's poem gives hints.<sup>s1</sup>

Nor less inspir'd and bold, in later time  
200 Flow'd the full melody of Sanscreeet rhyme,  
Which tells what hosts on Kirket's<sup>s2</sup> plains engag'd;  
What ruthless wars fraternal chieftains wag'd.  
Here the fierce Kooroos all their thunders pour;  
Bheem's dreadful shell, and Bheeshma's lion roar:  
205 There Pandoo's sons their favour'd ranks expand,  
The fiery gandeerv<sup>s3</sup> bends in Arjun's<sup>s4</sup> hand.  
Lo, gods and demigods, a countless throng,  
Blaze in the verse, and swell the pomp of song.  
High Casi's groves and the rapt'rous measures hail,  
210 And distant calpas<sup>s5</sup> kindle at the tale.

Such was thy strain, Vyasa,<sup>s6</sup> saint and sage,  
Th' immortal Berkeley of that elder age.  
Like him, with flames of holiest rapture fir'd,  
To thoughts sublime thy daring mind aspir'd,  
215 And, nature opening to thy ardent glance,  
Saw God alone through all the vast expanse.  
Mysterious theme! Beneath the peipal<sup>s7</sup> shade,  
His aged limbs the reverend Brahmin laid;  
Full on his brow the holy ointment glow'd,<sup>s8</sup>  
220 The snow-white zennar<sup>s9</sup> o'er his shoulder flow'd;  
The pointed cusa<sup>s10</sup> deck'd his green retreat,  
And Ganges' billow kiss'd his sacred feet:  
Serene he view'd the laughing scenes around,  
Bright Magadh's vales with floating chawla<sup>s11</sup> crown'd,  
225 The sunshine calm on Casi's turrets shed,  
And clouds reposing on Heemala's head;  
Then, all entranc'd, recall'd his wand'ring eye,  
And fix'd the gather'd beams on Deity:  
From height to height his musing spirit soar'd,  
230 And speechless thought<sup>s12</sup> th' unutter'd name ador'd:



Till words unconscious flowing from his tongue,  
He swell'd the strain, and mystic measures sung.

“’Tis all delusion: Heaven and earth and skies,  
“But air-wove images of lifeless dyes.

235 “HE only lives—Sole Being—None beside—

“The Self-existing, Self-beatify’d:

“All else but wakes at Maya’s<sup>93</sup> fairy call;

“For All that is, is not; or God is All.

“Stupendous Essence! obvious, yet unknown;

240 “For ever multiply’d, for ever One.

“I feel thee not, yet touch on every side;

“See not, yet follow where thy footsteps guide;

“Hear not thy voice, yet own its mystic power

“In breathing silence of the midnight hour.

245 “Oh, what art thou? since all this bursting scene,

“Unnumber’d isles, and countless waves between:

“This fabric huge, on floating pillars rais’d,

“With suns and fiery elements emblaz’d;

“And thy own pedma,<sup>94</sup> roseate flower of light,

250 “Emblem and cradle of Creative Might;

“Live only on thy sleepless eye reclin’d,

“Embosom’d deep in the abyss of Mind.

“Close but th’ all-seeing Mind, no splendor burns;

“Unfold, and all the Universe returns.

255 “Oh, what art thou? and what this darkling ray,

“Whose sadden’d lustre mourns in shrines of clay?

“Sprung from thyself, tho’ quench’d in human frame,

“Faint emanation of th’ Eternal Flame.

“Oh, fade these scenes, where phantom beauty glows,

260 “And bid th’ uncumber’d soul on Thee repose;

“Expanse how dread, immeasurable height,

“Depth fathomless, and prospect infinite.”

Yet whence this progress of the Sage’s mind,  
Beyond the bounds by Nature’s hand assign’d?

265 Whence, every form of vulgar sense o’erthrown,

Soars the rapt thought, and rests on God alone?

. . . . .

Ask the poor Hindoo if material things  
 Exist: he answers, Their existence springs  
 275 From Mind within, that prompts, protects, provides,  
 And moulds their beauties, or their terrors guides.  
 Blooms the red flow'ret? Durva<sup>95</sup> blushes there.  
 Flash lightnings fierce? dread Indra<sup>96</sup> fills the air.  
 The morning wakes, or high the white wave swells;  
 280 That Surya<sup>97</sup> brightens, Ganga<sup>98</sup> this impels.  
 Thus, in each part of this material scene,  
 He owns that matter leans on Mind unseen;  
 And in each object views some God pourtray'd,  
 This all in all, and that but empty shade;  
 285 The Mind extinct, its shadows too must flee,  
 And all the visible forget to be.  
 But when the Sage is taught these Gods to deem  
 The powers personify'd of One Supreme,  
 He not destroys their functions, but transfers;  
 290 Their titles changes, not their characters;  
 Content, for many, one Great Cause t' adore,  
 He now terms attributes what Gods before:  
 Yet still untouch'd that principle retains,  
 Mind, ever present, in all matter reigns;  
 295 His creed the same, whate'er that Mind he call,  
 In each imprison'd, or diffus'd through all.

Although Grant chiefly lamented the decline of ancient learning in India and heralded its revival under English missionaries and scholars, he also touched on Emerson's assigned subject and indicated its moral implications.<sup>99</sup>

375 But not alone the trumpet's madding roar  
 Expell'd the weeping Arts from Ganges' shore;  
 Lo! nurs'd in Superstition's gloomy bower,  
 Vice<sup>100</sup> wings with added speed the fatal hour;  
 Thick and more thick her blighting breath she sheds,  
 380 And Learning sickens as the mildew spreads.  
 For still this sovereign principle we find,  
 True in the individual as the kind,



Strong links and mutual sympathies connect  
The moral powers and powers of intellect;  
385 Still these on those depend by union fine,  
Bloom as they bloom, and as they fade, decline.

Grant's lines<sup>101</sup> on the caste system and on Transmigration, with his appended note on human souls condemned to live in the bodies of jackals, were in Emerson's mind when he wrote of India's chains and praised Columbia as giver of freedom to *all* men in the United States.<sup>102</sup> He also remembered this passage of Grant's poem in his Bowdoin Prize essay, upon which he was at work in March and April, 1821.<sup>103</sup>

575 At Brahma's stern decree, as ages roll,  
New shapes of clay await th' immortal soul;  
Darkling, condemn'd in forms obscene<sup>104</sup> to prowl,  
And swell the midnight melancholy howl.  
Be thine the task, his drooping eye to cheer,  
580 And elevate his hopes beyond this sphere,  
To brighter heavens than proud Sumeeru<sup>105</sup> owns,  
Though girt with Indra and his burning thrones.  
Then shall he recognize the beams of day,  
And fling at once the four-fold chain<sup>106</sup> away.

Grant's extravagant praise of Britain as the liberator of India was, of course, unacceptable to Ralph, who was a school-boy during the War of 1812 and who had already written poems on Columbia and the westward course of empire. Britain's title ("Queen of many Isles") suggested to Emerson a name for India ("Queen of the East") and reminded him of Ocean's "thousand isles."<sup>107</sup>

BRITAIN, thy voice can bid the dawn ascend,  
540 On thee alone the eyes of ASIA bend.  
High Arbitress! to thee her hopes are given,  
Sole pledge of bliss, and delegate of Heaven;  
In thy dread mantle all her fates repose,

Or bright with blessings, or o'ercast with woes;  
 545 And future ages shall thy mandate keep,  
 Smile at thy touch, or at thy bidding weep.  
 Oh! to thy godlike destiny arise!  
 Awake and meet the purpose of the skies!  
 Wide as thy sceptre waves, let India learn  
 550 What virtues round the shrine of empire burn;  
 Some nobler flight let thy bold Genius tower,  
 Nor stoop to vulgar lures of fame or power;  
 Such power as gluts the tyrant's purple pride,  
 Such fame as reeks around the homicide.  
 555 With peaceful trophies deck thy throne, nor bare  
 Thy conquering sword, till Justice ask the war.

. . . . .

Be these thy trophies, Queen of many Isles!  
 590 On these high Heaven shall shed indulgent smiles.  
 First, by thy guardian voice to India led,  
 Shall Truth divine her tearless victories spread;  
 Wide and more wide the heaven-born light shall stream,  
 New realms from thee shall catch the blissful theme,  
 595 Unwonted warmth the soften'd savage feel,  
 Strange chiefs admire, and turban'd warriors kneel,  
 The prostrate East submit her jewell'd pride,  
 And swarthy kings adore the Crucify'd.

From the following lines Emerson caught the optimism with  
 which Grant regarded India's future—and something of his  
 florid diction.<sup>109</sup>

Till from the blazing line to polar snows,  
 610 Through varying realms, one tide of blessing flows.  
 Then shall thy breath, celestial Peace, unbind  
 The frozen heart, and mingle mind with mind;  
 With sudden youth shall slumb'ring Science start,  
 And call to life each long-forgotten art,  
 615 Retrace her ancient paths, or new explore,  
 And breathe to wond'ring worlds her mystic lore.



Yes, it shall come! E'en now my eyes behold,  
In distant view, the wish'd-for age unfold.  
Lo, o'er the shadowy days that roll between,  
620 A wand'ring gleam foretells th' ascending scene!  
Oh, doom'd victorious from thy wounds to rise,  
Dejected INDIA, lift thy downcast eyes,  
And mark the hour, whose faithful steps for thee  
Through Time's press'd ranks bring on the jubilee!

The influence of Southey's *The Curse of Kehama* upon Emerson's poem will be chiefly demonstrated in the notes following the text of the poem. I need not summarize the action of the former work, because Scott's outline is easily available.<sup>110</sup> Southey's preface sets forth its important theme.

In the religion of the Hindoos, which of all false religions is the most monstrous in its fables, and the most fatal in its effects, there is one remarkable peculiarity. Prayers, penances, and sacrifices, are supposed to possess an inherent and actual value, in no degree depending upon the disposition or motive of the person who performs them. They are drafts upon Heaven, for which the Gods cannot refuse payment. The worst men, bent upon the worst designs, have in this manner obtained power which has made them formidable to the Supreme Deities themselves, and rendered an *Avatar*, or Incarnation of Veeshnoo the Preserver, necessary.

Kehama, the "man-almighty," in his attempt to control earth and heaven through his penances, resembled other tyrant rajahs whose threats and achievements brought Narayena or Vishnu, the second person of the Hindu Triad, into life to save mankind from oppression.<sup>111</sup> (Hebrew apocalyptic reflects a similar expectation—the coming of the Messiah when the world has reached the lowest stage of degradation and despair.) When Kehama was about to sacrifice his one-hundredth horse and gain control over the Swerga (heaven), Southey describes the suspense in these lines:<sup>112</sup>

Dost thou tremble, O Indra, O God of the Sky,  
 Why slumber those Thunders of thine  
 Dost thou tremble on high, . .  
 Wilt thou tamely the Swerga resign, . .  
 Art thou smitten, O Indra, with dread?  
 Or seest thou not, seest thou not, Monarch divine,  
 How many a day to Seeva's shrine  
 Kehama his victim hath led?  
 Nine and ninety days are fled,  
 Nine and ninety steeds have bled;  
 One more the rite will be completed,  
 One victim more, and this the dreadful day,  
 Then will the impious Rajah seize thy seat,  
 And wrest the thunder-sceptre from thy sway.  
 Along the mead the hallowed Steed  
 Yet bends at liberty his way;  
 At noon his consummating blood will flow.  
 O day of woe! above, below,  
 That blood confirms the Almighty Tyrant's reign!  
 Thou tremblest, O Indra, O God of the Sky,  
 Thy thunder is vain!  
 Thou tremblest on high for thy power!  
 But where is Veeshnoo at this hour,  
 But where is Seeva's eye?  
 Is the Destroyer blind?  
 Is the Preserver careless for mankind?

Liberty-loving and republican Ralph Emerson clearly had no respect for this tyrant who persecuted the poor peasant Ladurlad and his lovely daughter, Kailyal, and scornfully refers to him in line 142 of his poem. Southey thus not only provided Emerson with a small encyclopedia of oriental knowledge but also a story illustrating the idealistic theme of *Comus*, "Virtue may be assailed but never hurt."<sup>113</sup> Southey also influenced Emerson's diction.<sup>114</sup>

"Indian Superstition" is a significant but in no sense a



successful poem. In it Emerson attempted to tie together a number of pictures or images—clear, doubtless, in his own mind, but blurred to us, largely because of crowding, condensation, poor transitions, and predominance of didactic purpose. The vagueness of much of the piece to one who comes upon it without commentary is partly attributable to the reader's unfamiliarity with what was once common knowledge. Taken by themselves, the chief pictures are interesting, because they foreshadow the "eye-mindedness" of his maturity, and the successful handling of images in such a lyric as "Each and All." Here they are: (a) Ariel and the sylphs of Pope's "The Rape of the Lock" and Ariel of *The Tempest* (1-6); (b) Error's Den, etc., in Book I of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (7, 15-19); (c) the monstrous Jugger-naut idol riding over fanatic devotees in India (25-29); (d) a composite view of Hindu superstition from Southey and contemporary reports of missionaries regarding the terrible Brahmin theism that forced men into excruciating penances and human oblations on the banks of the Ganges (33-38; 47-66); (e) Kehama, the sacrificer of horses and the oppressor of peasants (70-78); (f) Milton's concept of "a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep" in *Areopagitica* blended with the picture of Satan and his cohorts lying thunderstruck on the burning lake of Hell in Book I of *Paradise Lost* (79-88); (g) the rise of the goddess Columbia, reflecting other poems of the period of the American Revolution (91-102); (h) the paradisiacal life in the Vale of Cashmere, as described in early Indian literature (103ff.); (i) the Creation of the world and the birth of Brahma in a lotus flower (105-110); (j) the picture of desolation, resembling Grant's and the current "ruin" literature of early Romanticism—e.g., Volney's *Ruins*—(112-120); (k) maids of empire assemble for judgment—the motif of the Valkyries or of Gray's "The Fatal Sisters"—from Northern



mythology (125-126); (1) Freedom unsheathes her sword to march throughout the world (135ff.).

The meaning of Emerson's poem will be clearer if it is analyzed as follows:

- Introduction: Aided by Prospero's book, Emerson invokes the stern spirits of India to commune with him.
- I. Picture of dishonored India—Superstition's court—the fanaticism that supports the Juggernaut—the hopelessness and misery of religionists—children thrown as offerings into the Ganges—the misuse of wealth in India's Hindu shrines.
  - II. The illusory world in which the Indian worshiper is tossed about by mysterious powers—He faces terrifying paradoxes and spiritual horrors, with unending penances. (All this echoes *Kehama*.)
  - III. Description of the tyranny and spiritual power of a Brahmin who through penances has (like *Kehama*) begun to subdue not only earth but heaven—misery of those whom he punishes or pursues with vengeance. (Emerson is thinking of *Ladurlad* and *Kailyal*.)
  - IV. When will India gain her freedom and in spite of opposition find the joy of nationhood and enlightenment like Columbia?
  - V. India's happier times recalled, especially the creation of the world and the Incarnation of Brahma—halcyon times when learning flourished—what a contrast to the present havoc and sorrow!
  - VI. Emerson's vision of the awakening—Maids of empire come to strike off India's shackles and banish Superstition.—Foremost among them is Columbia, the guardian angel of the United States, flushed with recent victories over the British.
  - VII. The United States is described.—It has no Indras and no Kehamas.—The goddess Freedom dwells among the

common people as well as among the wealthy. She wishes to extend her dominion over the world, threatening superstition and tyranny everywhere.—India has begun to catch the spirit. (The Carboneria in Italy have been the most recent converts to liberty.)

Since no first draft of the poem seems to have survived, we cannot observe Emerson's early methods of revision or note what elements in the original he decided to excise in preparing the present text. I am inclined to believe that in its earliest state the conclusion was much more concrete and more typically "Yankee" than the conventional rhetoric about Columbia and the veiled allusion to the Italian rebels. One bit of evidence seems to justify such a view. Inside the cover of an early notebook near some notes on bamboo and on the giant banyan tree of India<sup>115</sup> appear four spirited lines which make Emerson's little poem prophetic of twentieth-century India, in which Freedom, as predicted, has won her victory—or part of it.

Britain withdraw her legions from the land  
Her thirsty despots & their fierce command  
And Hindoo heroes rule their native shore  
And heaven the long lost boon of peace restore.

My final word concerns the style and diction of "Indian Superstition," which opens in the balanced and restrained manner of "The Rape of the Lock." Emerson had noted Walter's article on Pope, which had praised that poem for its ingenuity.<sup>116</sup>

As to the machinery Johnson acknowledges that it is not Pope's invention, and Warton shews that he found it in the *Compte de Gabalis*. Indeed the same aerial beings, with different names and characters, may be observed in Shakespeare's *Midsummer's Night Dream*; they existed traditionally in the days of Spenser, and are mentioned in various poets of that age, now not generally known. A little race of similar beings, who sleep on the air-



spider's web and travel on moon-beams, is still said to exist among them by the inhabitants of a certain English county, remote from the capital, the name of which I do not recollect; and there is little doubt, that a curious inquirer by the aid of poetical archaeology might trace the history of these diminutive intelligences back to the age of chivalry.... The machinery of the Rape of the Lock is not therefore of Pope's invention. He found the beings already existing, and only gave them new occupations in a humorous scene of domestick life. Before they lurked in flowers or roved in the woods, but now Pope has introduced them into the parlour and assigned them the care of the toilet or card table.

Beginning with line 11, however, the tone of "Indian Superstition" becomes increasingly romantic. Significant are Emerson's choice of adjectives,<sup>117</sup> his occasional Miltonic touches,<sup>118</sup> and his studied alliteration.<sup>119</sup> (He had been reading Sidney Willard's well-illustrated article<sup>120</sup> on the last-mentioned subject between February 24 and March 3, 1821.) His interest in Spenser<sup>121</sup> is evident in the allusion to Book I of the *Faerie Queene*,<sup>122</sup> in his choice of abstractions,<sup>123</sup> and in his intruding three alexandrines<sup>124</sup> among his heroic couplets. His imagery, as in his earlier poems, is heavily Hebraic.<sup>125</sup> He liked word contrasts of darkness-clouds-storm figures with their opposites of light-lightning-sun-sunny.<sup>126</sup> Whereas Grant often mentioned "trophies," Emerson used figures of crown-wreath-brow.<sup>127</sup> Both men used words denoting shackles-chains-thralldom. Emerson apparently followed Southey in his thunder-summit-mountain imagery,<sup>128</sup> but stood independent of his sources in his liking for sanguinary words: blood-bloody-crimson.<sup>129</sup>

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1. See its *Asiatic Researches; or Transactions . . . for enquiring into the history, the antiquities, the arts and sciences, and literature of Asia* (20 vols.; Calcutta, 1788-1836). Vols. 1-10 were reprinted verbatim from the foregoing originals at London, 1801-1811. Two other

volumes appeared before 1819. The Massachusetts Historical Society was founded in 1791.

2. John Shore, 1st Baron Teignmouth, *Memoirs of the Life, Writings and Correspondence of Sir William Jones* (2 vols.; London, 1806), II, 367-370. A copy of this work was owned by the Rev. William Emerson. R. W. E. began searching for it *ca.* Jan. 1, 1821. See footnote 55 *infra*.

3. Watson was Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge and Archdeacon of Ely. See his "A Discourse" in *The Asiatick Miscellany* (2 vols.; Calcutta, 1785-1786), I, 1-17, esp. pp. 5, 10. Emerson read this first volume *ca.* March, 1820.

4. *Ibid.*, I, 13.

5. Its reading room or library became the foundation for the library of the Boston Athenaeum in 1807. See James Elliot Cabot, *A Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (6th ed., 2 vols.; Boston and New York, 1890), I, 23-26.

6. Issued in 10 volumes, Boston, 1804-1811. David Phineas Adams edited only the first six numbers of Vol. I. William Emerson was editor until 1805, when he was succeeded by Samuel Cooper Thacher, librarian of Harvard University between 1808 and 1811. For Mary Moody Emerson's many contributions to this periodical, see *Journal of the Proceedings of the Society which conducts The Monthly Anthology and Boston Review (1805-1811)*, ed. M. A. DeWolfe Howe (Boston, 1910), pp. 317-319.

7. *Monthly Anthology*, I (1803-1804), 132-133.

8. "Sacontala, or The Fatal Ring (Act I)," *Monthly Anthology*, II (1805), 360-366. For continuations, see 409-413, 466-472, 520-526, 578-583, 639-656.

9. *Monthly Anthology*, II (1805), 370-376.

10. *Ibid.*, IV (1807), 227-330.

11. *Ibid.*, V (1808), 82-88.

12. See Kenneth W. Cameron, *Emerson the Essayist* (2 vols.; Raleigh, North Carolina, 1945), II, 135-137.

13. The editor and "translator"—probably the author—was Elizabeth Hamilton. Two editions are recorded in the British Museum: 2 vols.; Dublin, 1797; 2nd ed., 2 vols.; London, 1801.

14. Third ed. (2 vols.; London, 1798), II, 178-251.

15. First ed., London, 1810. The notes cover pp. 269-376; it should



be remembered that Southey's sources automatically became Emerson's also.

16. Published at Norwich, Conn., 1817. (Copy in the Boston Athenaeum.) The instructive appendix, covering pp. 37-95, deals with the following: (1) Belief of the Hindus in an eternal and omnipotent God. (Includes Sir William Jones's "Hymn to Narayena" with commentary.) (2) Two classes of worshipers: the Direct (or mystic) and Indirect (or worshipers of God through images). (3) Assemblies of the Hindus to hear the legends of the gods. (4) The Earthen Age. (5) The annual drowning of the gods. (6) Primeval Deities of the Hindus: Brahma, the creator; Vishnu, the preserver; Siva, the destroyer. (7) The incarnations of Vishnu to preserve men from tyranny. (8) The churning of the sea. (9) Minor Deities. (10) Moral character of the gods. (11) The worship of the Hindus. (12) The influence of religious austerities. (13) The reverence paid to the objects of nature and living creatures. (14) Religious devotees.

17. See also the significant "Dissertation concerning the Customs, Manners, Languages, Religion and Philosophy of the Hindoos," prefixed to Muhammed Firishtah, *The History of Hindostan*, trans. Alexander Dow (2 vols.; London, 1768), I, xxi-lxix. (Harvard had 3 vols., London, 1770-1772.)

18. Published as Vol. III of *A Catalogue of the Library of Harvard University* (3 vols.; Cambridge, 1830). See works listed under the following headings: Oriental and Other Languages, Oriental Literature, Voyages and Travels, Asian . . . and Other History, Sermons, and Philosophy.

19. The first series (6 vols.; Boston, 1813-1818) was edited by Noah Webster; the new series (5 vols.; Boston, 1819-1823) was edited by Henry Ware.

20. See respectively: orig. ser., II (1814), 343-344; III (1815), 23-24; V (1817), 123-125.

21. *North American Review*, VI (1817-1818), 386-393; IX (1819), 36-58.

22. See XV (1816), 682-684; XI (1812), 261-272; X (1811), 248-258; XII (1813), 646-669.

23. See the bibliography of his early reading in the literature regarding the Orient in Appendix C.

24. See Frederic Ives Carpenter, *Emerson and Asia* (Cambridge,

1930), *passim*, esp. p. 10; Arthur Christy, *The Orient in American Transcendentalism* (New York, 1932); Ralph L. Rusk, *The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York, 1949), pp. 83, 93.

25. See note 11.

26. I have simplified the difficult typography of the original.

27. See Alexander Fraser Tytler, Lord Woodhouselee, *Elements of General History, Ancient and Modern*, to which are added a table of chronology, etc. (From the 7th English ed., with continuation by Thomas Robbins, covering 1700–1815; Hartford, 1818, p. 257.)

28. Dugald Stewart, *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (2 vols.; [Edinburgh, 1816]), II, 527-530, 556.

29. MS. Records of the College Faculty, IX (1814–1822), 247-248.

30. University in Cambridge: *Order of Performances for Exhibition, Tuesday, April 24, 1821* (Cambridge, 1821), p. 4.

31. "May I become a light!" (Cf. Genesis 1:3.)

32. See *A Poem on the Restoration of Learning in the East* (Cambridge, [Eng.], 1805); and in *Classical Journal*, V, no. 10 (1812), 317-333.

33. In Salem (Cushing and Appleton), 1807. The edition was actually printed by Greenough, Stebbins and Hunt, State Street, Boston.

34. The Boston Athenaeum had both the English and American editions. Although Harvard had only the edition in the *Classical Journal*, it made a special listing of the little work in its printed catalogue of 1830. It may originally have had copies of the separate, but, if so, they were lost before the fourth decade of the century.

35. Emerson's *Letters* (ed. R. L. Rusk, 6 vols.; New York, 1939), I, 99-100.

36. A MS. owned by the R. W. E. Memorial Association, now in the Houghton Library at Harvard.

37. Harvard owned two editions: London, 1791; London, 1802. The Boston Athenaeum also owned two: Dublin, 1791; London, 1804.

38. William Robertson, *The Works* (8 vols.; Oxford, 1815), VIII, 325. Cf. the two kinds of spirits invoked in the beginning of Emerson's poem.

39. London, 1814. See *Emerson the Essayist*, II, 154, 171.

40. See *Emerson the Essayist*, II, 155, 180. (Boston Library Society List, no. 133.)



41. The work was published in 2 vols., London, 1815. Another ed. (2 vols.) London, 1816. See esp. chaps. iii and iv. See *Emerson the Essayist*, II, 155. Cf. "Indian Superstition," ll. 67-78.

42. See Kenneth W. Cameron, *Emerson's Early Reading List (1819-1824)* (New York, 1951), pp. 4, 9. Vol. I of the *Miscellany* contains more than 500 quarto pages. For his transcripts of "Narayena," see *Journals*, I, 157, and his *Parnassus* (Boston, 1875), p. 180.

43. *Quarterly Review*, XXII (July, 1819), 59-102.

44. Completed July 21, 1820. See *Two Unpublished Essays*, ed. Edward Everett Hale (Boston and New York, 1896), pp. 3-39.

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

46. See *Letters*, I, 93. No final copy seems to survive, but the sprawling rough draft is preserved in Emerson's unpublished journals.

47. See *Quarterly Review*, XXII (1819), 66.

48. George Berkeley, "Verses on the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America," *The Works* (London, 1837), p. 394. For commentary, see Burton Stevenson, *The Home Book of Quotations* (3rd ed.; New York, 1937), p. 52.

49. They seem to be ll. 140-153 of the sprawled sections of the rough draft.

50. *Two Unpublished Essays*, p. 15.

51. See "Sanskrit Poetry," *Edinburgh Review*, XXXIII (1820), 431-442.

52. See *Emerson the Essayist*, I, 69-77.

53. Vol. I (no more published), London, 1805. See *Emerson's Early Reading List*, pp. 6, 10.

54. *Edinburgh Review*, V (1804-1805), 288-301, 329-346. See *Emerson the Essayist*, II, 157.

55. See "Books Inquirenda" in *Journals*, I, 82. I date the entry ca. Jan. 1, 1821, on evidence of the dates of his finding and reading the *inquirenda* immediately preceding and following it. The total list of books to be searched for appears at the end of the MS. "Wide World No. 2," and covers the period of the manuscript, from September, 1820. I believe he soon thereafter found Teignmouth in his father's library. He seems to have come upon it later than his classmates. A glance through the charging records of the college library for the freshman year (1817-1818) reveals that Emerson's close friends were reading Jones's poems and Teignmouth's *Life of Jones*.

Friedrich Schlegel  
Lectures on the History of Literature,  
Ancient and Modern  
(2 vols.), Edinburgh, 1818.

HINDOOISM

ORIENT

INDIA

I, 71

Lecture IV, vol. I, 156-198

Lecture V, vol. I, 199-234

Lecture VIII, vol. I, 311-346.



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Joseph Bancroft Hill and John Boynton Hill, for example, borrowed both these works during June and July, 1818. For their relationship with R. W. E., see *Emerson the Essayist*, I, 457-458, which gives the minutes of the literary club "without a name."

56. See the hint of this theme in *Journals*, I, 83. See the footnote on climate in Appendix B for the principal influences upon Emerson and his contemporaries.

57. See *Emerson the Essayist*, II, 157.

58. *Monthly Anthology*, IV (1807), 86, 654-656.

59. *Ibid.*, pp. 259-265, *et passim*.

60. *Ibid.*, pp. 36, 253-255.

61. *Ibid.*, pp. 602-603. See Kenneth W. Cameron, "The Potent Song in Emerson's Merlin Poems," *Philological Quarterly*, XXXII (1953), 22-28.

62. *Monthly Anthology*, IV (1807), 327-330.

63. London, 1810. The notes cover pp. 269-376.

64. *Op. cit.*, pp. 339, 363. The first is found in Sir William Jones, *Works* (13 vols.; London, 1807), VII, 344-345.

65. See *Emerson the Essayist*, II, 158, 182, and Karl Wilhelm Friedrich von Schlegel, *Lectures on the History of Literature, Ancient and Modern*, trans. John G. Lockhart (2 vols.; Edinburgh, 1818) and (2 vols.; Philadelphia, 1818). See esp. pp. 191-198. Emerson probably could not have known Schlegel's *Ueber die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* (1808).

66. "On the Idealism of Berkeley."

67. I might have included an unfinished "letter poem," dated Sept. 24, 1817, now found in *Letters*, I, 42-44. It, too, is written in heroic couplets and deals with the abstractions Hope, Despair, and Superstition. Emerson's unconventional method of footnoting (p. 44) appears in "Indian Superstition" (l. 67).

68. See Agnes Marie Sibley, *Alexander Pope's Prestige in America, 1725-1835* (New York, 1949); and Leon Howard, "The American Revolt against Pope," *Studies in Philology*, XLIX (1952), 48-65.

69. I have given reasons above for assuming that the poem, "Improvement," in its final form, praised America. For the prevalence of patriotism in the American literature contemporary with Emerson, see Van Wyck Brooks, *The Flowering of New England* (New York, [1941]), the early chapters and esp. pp. 78ff. and 126ff.



70. "Lines on Washington written at Concord Dec 24th 1814" in *Letters*, VI, 329.

71. Cf. "Indian Superstition," ll. 102, 135-138, 141-148.

72. Delivered at the performance of the Boston Latin School, Aug. 25, 1815. See *Letters*, VI, 330-332.

73. An allusion to the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 appears in ll. 135-138 of "Indian Superstition."

74. Emerson's interest in Napoleon throughout life and the problem of the dictator are treated in Perry Miller, "Emersonian Genius and the American Democracy," *New England Quarterly*, XXVI (1953), 27-44. See Brooks, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

75. He had, doubtless, read Francis Jeffrey's severe strictures on Southey's verse experiments in the *Edinburgh Review*, XVII (1810-1811), 429-465. In *Letters*, I, 11, he remembered Samuel Johnson's thundering against "lax and lawless versification." See also Thomas Brown's *The Renovation of India* (Edinburgh, 1808) mentioned above.

76. Besides Improvement, the abstractions include Grandeur, Ignorance, Rhyme, Fashion, Ambition, Glory, Fate, Danger, Death, Havoc, Ruin, Destiny, Strength, and Albion.

77. See *Letters*, I, 67.

78. Grant, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

79. See "Indian Superstition," ll. 103ff., 111-112.

80. See Grant, *op. cit.*, pp. 11, 25. Emerson found this theme also in Broughton, *op. cit.*, p. 8, *et passim*.

81. Grant, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-22. Cf. "Indian Superstition," ll. 53, 105ff.

82. "The following passage will be best explained by a general note. The other great epic poet of India, besides Valmic, was Vyasa. He wrote an epic poem, called The Mahabbarat. Of this poem Mr. Wilkins has translated an episode, called, The Bhagvat Geeta, or episode of Bhagvat or Crishna, another name for Vishnu. The episode describes the preliminaries to a dreadful battle fought near Delhi, between the Kooroos and Pandoos, two great collateral branches of the same family. The Pandoos were successful. The Bhagvat Geeta is considered as too sacred for common readers, and is said to contain all the mysteries of Hindooism. It certainly abounds with sublime passages" (Grant).

83. "The gandeerv was Arjun's bow" (Grant).



84. "Arjun, one of the Pandoos, was the favourite and pupil of Crishna, who acted as his charioteer in this battle" (Grant).

85. "A calpa is a day of Brahma" (Grant).

86. "Vyasa was not only a poet. He founded the most celebrated philosophical school in India, called the Vedanti School; of which the principal tenet is that so ably recommended to his countrymen by the celebrated Bishop Berkeley; viz. 'That matter exists only as it is perceived'" (Grant).

87. "The sacred fig-tree" (Grant).

88. "The Brahmins paint a streak of yellow ochre on their foreheads; some sects horizontally, and others perpendicularly" (Grant).

89. "The zennar is the sacred thread worn by Brahmins" (Grant).

90. "The cusa is the most sacred species of grass" (Grant).

91. "Chawla, the Indian name of rice" (Grant).

92. "The OM, or name of the Deity, never to be uttered but in silence" (Grant).

93. "Maya, or Delusion; supposed to be a Goddess sprung from Brahma" (Grant).

94. "Pedma, the sacred name of the lotos; an object of supreme veneration in all the mythological systems of the East, especially in that of the Hindûs. Brahma is said to have been born in a lotos, when he created the world. It was regarded also as an emblem of the creative power. 'This plant (says Mr. Knight) being productive of itself, and vegetating from its own matrice, without being fostered in the earth, was naturally adopted as the symbol of the productive power of waters, upon which the active spirit of the Creator operated, in giving life and vegetation to matter'" (Grant).

95. "Durva is the most beautiful species of grass, and supposed to be the residence of a Nymph of the same name. Its flowers, says Sir W. Jones, seen through a lens, are like minute rubies" (Grant).

96. "The God of the firmament" (Grant). See also the note on l. 141 of "Indian Superstition."

97. "The Deity of the Sun" (Grant).

98. "Gamga is the Goddess of the Ganges, who sprung, like Pallas, from the head of the Indian Jove" (Grant).

99. Grant, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

100. "The inevitable tendency of vice to degrade the faculties of the soul, is most eloquently insisted on by Longinus, in the last section of his celebrated treatise" (Grant).

101. Grant, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.

102. See "Indian Superstition," ll. 13, 35, 76ff., 129ff., 137, 146. Emerson's subject required him to ignore the military despotisms upon which Grant especially dwells.

103. See *Two Unpublished Essays*, p. 74: "After the decline of the Roman church the lower orders in Europe had no Indian Brahmin to tell them that in the eternal rounds of transmigration their souls could never rise above the jackal."

104. "The Hindûs of the lowest class firmly believe themselves to be of the same species as the jackals; and are taught, that through eternal transmigrations they shall never rise higher than those animals" (Grant). On this subject see also Southey, *The Curse of Kehama*, pp. 343-344.

105. "Sumeeru is the mountain on which Indra's heaven is placed" (Grant).

106. "In allusion to the four castes" (Grant).

107. Grant, *op. cit.*, pp. 34, 36, 37. On Columbia's role, see "Indian Superstition," ll. 137-140, 149-156.

108. "Indian Superstition," ll. 11-12, 140.

109. Grant, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-38.

110. Sir Walter Scott, "Southey's *Curse of Kehama*," *Quarterly Review*, V (1811), 40-61.

111. See Grant, *op. cit.*, p. 8; Southey, *The Curse of Kehama*, pp. 102-103; esp. Broughton, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-152. In his fourth Avatar or Outar, Vishnu was Nur Singh or the Man-Lion, who tore to pieces Harrunakus, a tyrant. In his fifth, he was Bawun or the Dwarf, overreaching Bul, a tyrannical and impious rajah. In his sixth, he was Purus Ram, who overcame the whole race of the Rajpoots from which an evil rajah sprang. In his eighth, he was Krishna, in which character he overthrew the usurper Kuns, performing deeds of valor in the *Muhabarut* or great war, which is the subject of the noblest Indian poem.

112. *The Curse of Kehama*, pp. 74-75. See also pp. 62, 68-69, 71, 76, 103.

113. *Ibid.*, p. 200.

114. Such words as adamantine, clouds, faulchion, fane, lightning, lineaments, thunder, and trumpet.

115. "No. XVIII" (Cabot's "M") reverse of fly leaf. It was apparently written at the same time as he composed the material beginning at the opposite end, in what is now known as "Cabot's M-



prime." See Typescript Journal now numbered "Houghton 16A, Part 1." Emerson might have known the following anti-British work: *A Vindication of the Hindoos from the Aspersions of the Rev. Claudius Buchanan . . . with a Refutation of the Arguments exhibited in his Memoir*, by a Bengal Officer (London, 1808). He might have seen the review, "A Vindication of the Hindoos," *Eclectic Review*, VII (1808), 252-272. For Emerson's creative use of the bamboo and banyan trees of India during his early years and for the possible sources of his information, see F. Y. St. Clair, "Emerson among the Siphars," *American Literature*, XIX (1947), 73-77.

116. "On Pope," *Monthly Anthology*, II (1805), 232-238. Emerson withdrew this volume from the Boston Library Society on Dec. 4, 1819, and kept it until the twenty-third. The quotation is on p. 237.

117. E.g., boundless, bloated, writhing, haggard, unholy, shuddering, blazoned, glittering.

118. E.g., l. 25.

119. See esp. ll. 17, 24, 29, 40, 45-47, 81, 102, 127, 137, 140, *et passim*.

120. See Sidney Willard, "Alliteration," *Monthly Anthology*, IV (1807), 654-656. See the shorter article on p. 86 of the same volume.

121. See *Letters*, I, 82 (Apr. 23-24, 1819): "I am reading . . . 3d Vol of Spenser's Faery Queen with which I am *delighted*." He read Thomas Warton's *Observations on the Fairy Queen of Spenser*, in two volumes, early in 1820. See "Spenser," *Monthly Anthology*, IV (1807), 36.

122. See ll. 15-19.

123. Many, of course, are paralleled in Grant's poem and in Southey's. Some are common enough in this period. See "Of Spenser's Allegorical Character" in Warton, *op. cit.* (2nd ed.; London, 1762), II, 87-113. Emerson was also probably acquainted with John Hughes's "Essay on Allegorical Poetry—On the Faerie Queen" in Vol. II of *Spenser's Works* (2 vols.; London, 1805).

124. See ll. 36, 74, 102. See Warton, *ed. cit.*, II, 154-155.

125. E.g., cherubim, bugle, trumpet, ark, law, angel, and archangel.

126. See ll. 1, 94-99, 127 and 91, 96, 102, 104.

127. See ll. 110-119.

128. E.g., ll. 92-93, 111. On the Himalayan imagery, see *The Curse of Kehama*, pp. 314-316. On thunder, see ll. 63, 95.

129. See ll. 18, 23, 36.





# Indian Superstition.

Cushioned on golden clouds, there are, who sail,  
And clad in splendour, ride the summer gale,  
Who sweep the atmosphere on painted wing,  
Swell their rich music, & adore their king;  
5 Whose silver lutes at sombre twilight play  
A soft farewell to all the pride of day.—  
Not these we seek,—yet from its cavern low,  
We fain would pluck the book of Prospero,  
With sterner Spirits hold communion high,  
10 And scan their natures with adventurous eye.

Far oer the East where boundless Ocean smiles,  
And greets the wanderer to his thousand isles,  
Dishonoured India clanks her sullen chain,  
And wails her desolation to the main.  
15 To her dark land the banded fiends resort,  
And Superstition crowds his haggard court.  
The bloated monster gluts his hellish brood,  
Gorging his banquet with the people's blood.  
Loud on the wind the shrieks of anguish rang,  
20 From victims writhing to his lion fang.

Lured by their frantic cry fell Rapine came,  
With scorpion whip & faulchion edged with flame,  
And the poor victim urged his bloody toil,  
For tyrants spurning at the wretch they spoil.  
25 O'er man the car of fiends tremendous rolled,  
On high the laugh of demons scared the bold;  
A cry from heaven pealed awful on their ear,  
And woke no echo, save the scream of fear.  
The shouts of joy, the burst of proud applause,  
30 Hope's happy song, the Victory's tale of wars—  
Were hushed to whispers of the stifled breath  
Still as the marble lineaments of death.  
Sunk in the grim abyss of misery,  
Crushed with the loaded wrath of earth & sky,  
35 Men bowed them down to slavery & chains,  
And labour's crimson drops came bursting from their veins.  
The maddened mother clasped her shuddering child,  
And flung him to the wave with accent wild,  
Despair's low moan arose while Rapine prowled,  
40 And maniac Horror clapped his hands, & howled.

The wealth which toiling ages proudly piled,  
To build an ark of honour undefiled,  
Where distant times might lift the song of praise,  
And men commend their sires in loud-voiced lays  
45 Was vainly hoarded on the plundered plains  
Where guilty gods have reared unholy fanes.

In such wild worship to mysterious powers  
The Indian stands in Ganges' holy bowers  
On the hot sands where human nature fails  
50 With Vishnu's aid he braves the fiery gales.



His cany hut on beds of lotus reared,  
 The groves of palm where Brahma was revered,  
 Soft though they seem to fancy's cheated eye,—  
 These yield no shelter to the brave that die.  
 55 Bewildered fancies in his scriptures tell—  
 'No faint oblations soothe the gods of hell,  
 'Go snuff the Dragon's breath, whose monstrous coil  
 'Girdles the world with everlasting toil;  
 'In the fierce ardour of the noon-tide sun  
 60 'Drink in the blast, for patient penance done,  
 'Else,—seek thy doom, and find it with the dead,  
 'And Yemen's vengeance revel on thy head!  
 'They sleep a sleep the thunder will not wake,  
 'They thirst with thirst which Ocean cannot slake,  
 65 'Not Brahma's self can quench the burning storm,  
 'And Seeva's red right hand our promise shall perform.'

\*And vain the ambitious toil by hope led on  
 To match proud Grandeur on his blazoned throne,  
 In the mid path to Honour's glittering shrine,  
 70 Stands the stern Bramin armed with plagues divine,  
 Whose wrath outgoes his daemon's yelling storm,—  
 Scoffs at the prayers which kneeling hope can form,  
 Due to presumption claims a forfeit life,  
 And lifts with taunting gibe the consecrated knife.  
 75 No crown of glory sheds its light for him,  
 No raptured trance reveals the cherubim,  
 Nor heaven nor earth contain a hope to save,  
 And wan Despair doth mock him in the grave.

\*The following paragraph alludes to the degradation of the lowest caste in India and the punishment which attends an attempt to alter their condition. [Emerson's note.]

How long shall anxious ages roll away,  
 80 Unblest with promise of approaching day,  
 Ere India's giant genius strongly wake,  
 Stretched in dark slumber oer Oblivion's lake,  
 Snatch from his heaven, aspiring to be free,  
 The crystal cup of Immortality?  
 85 Oh who can tell what joy creation owns  
 Through all her myriad Powers on sunbright thrones,  
 When crushed by all the plagues which blast the earth,  
 A nation struggles into godlike birth.  
 Such have been written on the page of time,  
 90 And thou sad land mayst read the tale sublime,  
 Once, wreathed in light, a peerless maiden shone,  
 High on her mountain-girdled land, alone;  
 Round the bright summit, in the distant sky  
 The far clouds mustered, & the storm drew nigh.  
 95 The growling thunderclouds of death rolled on,  
 And hid the sweet light of the golden sun.  
 That maid's majestic eye beheld serene  
 The gathering terrors of the hostile scene;  
 While oer her head the Storm's black legions closed,  
 100 And launched the bolt which all the fiends composed,  
 Fate snatched her scatheless from the impending blow,  
 And wove the laurelled lightnings round Columbia's brow.  
 Oh once illustrious in the elder time!  
 Young muses caroled in thy sunny clime;  
 105 When maids of heaven the flowers celestial curled  
 To twine the pillars which sustain the world,  
 When Brahma, for thy land, in distance viewed,  
 Abandoned his empyreal solitude;  
 Serene the Father veiled his glory mild,  
 110 Crowned thee with joy, & blest his favourite child.

Fair Science pondered on thy mountain brow,  
And sages mused—where Havoc welters now.  
The dazzling crown was thine, which soothed the brave  
Gathered in their rich glory, to the grave.  
115 Alas! thy wreath is sear, thy banners stained,  
Thy faith perverted, & thy shrines profaned.  
The cormorant sits lonely in thy walls,  
The bittern shrieks to Ruin's echoing halls,  
Robbed of its ancient pride, thy brow appears  
120 Sad with the sorrows of unnumbered years.

What choral burst awakes the startled deep?  
What visions strike Oblivion's iron sleep;—  
Gaze on yon parting cloud's refulgent shew!  
Revealing angel forms to men below,—  
125 The maids of empire come, whose awful sway  
The prostrate nations of the world obey.  
The cloud pavilion purples round the throng,  
Whose sweeping folds give echo to their song.  
India, they come to see thy shackles riven,  
130 To throw thy thralldom to the winds of heaven.  
The holy cherubim in heaven shall bow,  
The archangel's trump ring out its triumph now,  
Whose raptured note sounds out for aye farewell,  
To Superstition & the hosts of hell.

135 First in that throng—gathering her Eagle's food,  
Land of our pride! thy guardian angel stood;  
Flushed from her strife in Freedom's conquering cause,  
She holds the charter of sword-sanctioned laws;  
Fair as the dayspring, clad in burnished mail,  
140 Queen of the East! she hastes to bid thee hail.



No Indra thunders in Columbias sky,  
No "man-almighty" grasps at destiny,  
Bold were the arm whose rash presumption strove,  
To tamper with the Power whose law we love,—  
145 Look through the land! in every lonely glen  
Fair Freedom starts, amid the huts of men,  
Girds her bright armour round the limbs of Health,  
And mounts the marble battlement of wealth;  
Wide through the nations is her watchword known,  
150 Her spear uplifted, and her bugle blown,  
That sound went out with power across the globe  
To rend the idol and the royal robe;  
India hath caught it, where her ample moon,  
Rose to the music of the loud monsoon;  
155 Its latest echo woke the Italian shore,—  
It shall not sleep till Time shall be no more.

Apr. 14<sup>th</sup> 1821.

# Commentary on “Indian Superstition”<sup>1</sup>

1ff. Suggest Ariel, the sylphs and the gnomes in Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*. These opening lines were apparently intended as a partial frame for the bulk of the poem.

7, cavern. Shakespeare's Prospero promised to *drown* his book, but E. may have remembered the gloomy Cave of Spleen in Pope's *Rape*.

8, Prospero. See *The Tempest*, V, i, 54-57. E. refers to Prospero in *Journals*, I, 357.

9, sterner Spirits. Sterner than the sylphs and gnomes? than Prospero's Ariel? Cf. King Saul's communion with Samuel through the agency of the Witch of Endor (I Sam. 28:3-20).

12, thousand isles. Probably suggested by Grant's ll. 246 (“un-numbered isles”) and 589 (“Queen of many Isles”).

13, sullen chain. Grant, l. 584, makes India's fourfold chain refer to the caste system.

15ff. Influenced by Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Book I.

16, Superstition. The number of Hindu gods was estimated at more than 330,000,000. See Woodhouselee, *Elements*, p. 257; Anonymous (3); and Anonymous (9), pp. 383-388. (See E.'s paraphrase of the last in *Journals*, I, 304.)

18, people's blood. On exposure of children, see *Kehama*, p. 364. On the immolation of slaves and of widows with their deceased hus-

<sup>1</sup> References in these notes are considerably abbreviated, especially when drawn from the bibliography of Emerson's reading in Appendix C.

bands, see Anonymous (3) and (6); and *Kehama*, pp. 5, 8-10, 222, 271-277. See notes on ll. 25 and 117, *infra*.

20, to. Corrected in pencil to *in*, possibly in E.'s hand.

20, lion fang. See Grant, l. 70: "And tore, with lion fangs, the tyrant breast." The fourth Avatar or incarnation of the Deity was half lion and half man.

22, scorpion whip. Possible allusion to I Kings 12:11-14.

23, poor victim. He volunteered for penances or sacrifices under tyrant Hindu priests, who had no regard for those who offered themselves.

24, tyrants spurning. E. recalled the tyrannies on Ladurlad. See *Kehama*, pp. 17ff., 80.

25, car of fiends. On the Juggernaut, see Anonymous (1), (2), (3), (4); see *Kehama*, pp. 143-155, 349-353, esp. p. 351: Many "will offer themselves as a sacrifice to this idol, and desperately lie down on the ground, that the chariot-wheels may run over them, whereby they are killed outright; some get broken arms, some broken legs . . . and by this means they think to merit heaven. . . . They sometimes lie down in the track of this machine a few hours before its arrival, and, taking a soporiferous draught, hope to meet death asleep."

26, laugh of demons. On fiends of the air, see *Kehama*, pp. 88-90, 112, 224-226.

30, hope. E.'s poem contrasts despair and optimism. See ll. 67, 72, 77-78, etc.

33, abyss of misery. Visitors to Juggernaut for the annual festival of the Butt-Jattrā totaled 700,000. The number of deaths in a single year, caused by people's voluntarily placing themselves in the idol's path, by imprisonment for nonpayment of the demands of the Brahmins, or by scarcity of provisions, was incredible. Human bones covered the streets. Slavery was involved in carrying water from Hurdwar to the temple for religious libations. See *Kehama*, pp. 349-350.

35, slavery and chains. The heavy Juggernaut was eagerly pulled through the streets by human beings. For details concerning temple prostitution—"marrying the god"—see *Kehama*, pp. 351-353.

37, See Anonymous (9): "It is a practice in some parts of India to sacrifice their children to the Ganges, by drowning them in the stream. A child is often sacrificed, by hanging it up in a basket upon a tree, where it dies in two or three days, being generally destroyed



by ants or birds of prey. . . . Other modes of immolating the children are, by burying them alive, and by throwing them to the alligators." See also Noah Worcester's "Human Sacrifices"; *Kehama*, p. 222; and Anonymous (5) and (8).

42, ark of honour. For other examples of E.'s Hebraic imagery, see ll. 76, 124, 131-132, 136, etc.

44, commend their sires. Very little respect for ancestors as such appears among the East Indians, beyond the fact that sons are careful and dutiful regarding burial rites of deceased parents. Since the soul is believed to have no personality, there is no ancestor worship. E. may have been thinking of the cult of Lingam, Priapus or the phallus. See *Encyclopaedia [Britannica]* (Dobson's ed.) (18 vols.; Phila., 1798), VIII, 515: "This deity is adored the more fervently, as they [the Hindus] depend on their children for performing certain ceremonies to their manes, which they imagine will mitigate their punishment in the next world."

45, plundered plains. Possible reference to the despotic persecutions and conquests of men like Aurungzebe, described in Grant's lines (13-56), but E. was probably thinking of the mulcting activities of the Brahmin priests.

46, unholy fanes. See Anonymous (9) for details about the abominable sensuality of Hindu shrines, the cult of lingam, temple prostitution, money raising by deceptive oracles, the crushing political power of the Brahmins, their gluttony and selfishness.

47, mysterious powers. This and the next two lines appear in the rough draft of E.'s earlier poem, "Improvement," an excerpt from which appears in the introductory essay. See passage from William Robertson, quoted in the introductory essay, and its accompanying note (38).

48, holy bowers. Grant (l. 25) mentions the "consecrated bowers" in which Aurungzebe spent his youth.

49, human nature fails. On E.'s reaction to Eastern austerities discussed in Southey's "British Monasticism," see *Two Unpublished Essays*, pp. 38-39.

50, with Vishnu's aid. The harrowing experiences of Ladurlad and his daughter, in *Kehama*, were braved through the indirect help of Vishnu (or Narayena), the second member of the Hindu triad. As "the Preserver," Vishnu had frequently entered the phenomenal world

to rescue his worshipers from oppression. Southey implies how impossible it is for man to escape from these supernatural forces, unless aided by them. See Grant, p. 8, and Edward Moor, *The Hindu Pantheon* (London, 1810), pp. 15-34, 72-82.

51, lotus. See note on l. 105.

52, groves of palm. See *Kehama*, p. 113.

52, Brahma. For two other references to Brahma in this poem, see ll. 65 and 107, and notes. For Brahma's struggle for pre-eminence with Siva, see *Kehama*, pp. 205-206. See also Edward Moor, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-14.

53, fancy's cheated eye. Note "Bewildered fancies" in l. 55. On the delusiveness of the phenomenal world or the mind's Maya, see Grant, ll. 233-296, quoted in the introductory dissertation, and the excerpts from the *Bhagavadgita* in *Kehama*, pp. 362-363.

54, no shelter. E. recalled the episodes at the hut of Ladurlad, under the banyan tree, and at Mount Meru. See *Kehama*, p. 31, where Ladurlad says of the Rajah: "He is Almighty then! . . . Air knows him, Water knows him; Sleep / His dreadful word will keep; / Even in the grave there is no rest for me, / Cut off from that last hope, the wretches [*sic*] joy; / And Veeshnoo hath no power to save, / Nor Seeva to destroy." On the curse which caused the very elements to flee from Ladurlad, see *Kehama*, pp. 18-19, 27.

56ff. "No faint oblations . . ." Ll. 56-65 appear to be Emerson's. I have not found them in any of the Hindu scriptures. E. has Southey's poem chiefly in mind at this point. The passage suggests the two possibilities open for the Indian. He may make a "faint" effort to follow his religion and, like most mortals, encounter death, judgment, and punishment under Yama (Yemen), or he may make heavy penances the preoccupation of his life. A Hindu like Kehama, through his austerities, might reduce Brahma, Yama, Siva (Seeva) and other high deities to servitude or co-operation. (See *Kehama*, pp. 291-292.) For the terrible penances assumed in order to avoid Yama's vengeance, see the *Laws of Menu*, Bk. XI, and the *Institutes of Vishnu*, sections lxvii. For the stern ascetic of Hinduism in general, see *Institutes of Vishnu*, sections xcv-xcvi. On the hells or punishments after death because of sins not atoned for, see *Institutes of Vishnu*, sections xliii-xliv, and the *Vishnu Purana*, Bk. II, ch. vi.

57, Dragon's breath. For the great serpent of the sphere, which



winds its enormous folds around seven continents, and for dragons in Indian folklore, see *Kehama*, pp. 361, 332; also 105, 120-123. E.'s symbol suggests the egregious penitential system of Hinduism.

62, Yemen's vengeance. Yama judged departed souls as they reported to him at Yamapur immediately upon leaving the body. After receiving a just sentence, the soul either ascended to the Swerga (i.e., the lowest heaven) or was drawn to Narac, the region of serpents, or on earth entered some animal, vegetable, or mineral prison. See *Kehama*, pp. 365-367, 212, 224, 236ff., 249; Moor, *op. cit.*, pp. 303-310. Yama was the subject of many poems. See, for example, the *Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register*, VII (January-June, 1819), 599-600: "The Road to the Judgment Seat of Yama," "The Appearance of Yama," and "Yama's Address to the Souls of Wicked Kings."

65, Not Brahma's self. See also ll. 52 and 107. See *Kehama*, p. 103. The meaning appears to be that a human being's heavy austerities can prevent Brahma from action and force Siva to capitulate. *Kehama*, pp. 50-51, explains how the infamous Rajah has forced Vishnu to "turn his face in doubt toward Seeva's throne." Indra trembles and turns pale. Kehama's penances wrest from Siva "power so vast, That even Seeva's self, the Highest, cannot grant and be secure."

66, Seeva. See Moor, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-71. Siva, the third deity of the Hindu triad, is Time, Justice, Fire, Creativity, and Destroyer. He also personifies reproduction. He has three eyes, but only one head. A serpent is coiled around his neck. See *Kehama*, pp. 56, 69, 74ff., 94, 103, 205ff. Emerson was fond of drawing serpents or snakes in some of his earliest journals.

66, red right hand. Plate 13 in Edward Moor's *The Hindu Pantheon* shows Siva, one of whose two right hands is raised and contains a rope for strangling. Since fire is Siva's element and destruction is his province, the murdering hand should be red. I suspect that E. knew Henry Kirke White's hymn, "Divine Sovereignty," and the following stanza:

He smiles, we live,—he frowns, we die,—  
We hang upon his word:  
He rears his *red right arm* on high,  
And ruin bears his sword.

66, our promise. *Our* originally read *my*, suggesting the utterance of a Kehama or earthly despot.



67 (footnote), degradation of the lowest caste. See Woodhouse-lee, *Considerations*, I, 116ff., 122ff., 246ff.—his chapters iii and iv, heightened by E.'s reading of *Kehama*. See also William Robertson, *An Historical Disquisition*.

70, stern Bramin. *Kehama*.

71ff., daemon's yelling storm. See *Kehama*, p. 90, for the demon Arvalan's cruelty to Ladurlad:

Anon the Spirit wav'd a second hand;  
Down rush'd the obedient whirlwind from the sky,  
Scoop'd up the sand like smoke, and from on high  
Shed the hot shower upon Ladurlad's head.  
Where'er he turns, the accursed Hand is there;  
East, West, and North and South, on every side  
The Hand accursed waves in air to guide  
The dizzying storm; ears, nostrils, eyes and mouth,  
It fills and choaks, and, clogging every pore,  
Taught him new torments might be yet in store.  
Where shall he turn to fly? behold his house  
In flames! uprooted lies the marriage-bower,  
The Goddess buried by the sandy shower.  
Blindly, with staggering step, he reels about,  
And still the accursed Hand pursued,  
And still the lips of scorn their mockery-laugh renew'd.

73, Due to presumption. See also l. 143. E. deals with pride and with presumptuous men in his early poem, "Improvement" (1820).

74, consecrated knife. On oriental massacres of slaves and enemies, see *Kehama*, p. 311, but note that consecrated or sacrificial knives are *not* mentioned. E. was probably thinking of the sacrifice of the "consecrated horse" or *Aswamedha*, as in *Kehama*, 307-309. On the slaughtering of animals (but not human beings) for sacrifices, see the "Code of Menu" in Sir William Jones's *Works* (13 vols.; London, 1807), VII, 248-253, VIII, 81-121.

76, trance . . . cherubim. See the prophet's famous vision in Isaiah 6:1-13. On E.'s Hebraic imagery, see note on l. 42.

81, India's giant genius. E.'s hint for India as a sleeping giant may have come from Indian folklore. See *Kehama*, pp. 292-294; also 119, 129, 170. I suspect that he was thinking of Milton's *Areopagitica*: "Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing her-

self like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks: methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth. . . .”

82, Oblivion’s lake. See also l. 122. E. might have remembered here Satan and his angels lying stunned on the burning lake in *Paradise Lost*, I, 50ff., 283-329.

84, cup of Immortality. On the beverage in the Amreeta cup and its origin, see *Kehama*, pp. 370-376. Yama, the judge, had charge of the cup. See *Kehama*, pp. 71, 195, 199, 214ff., 253-268. Southey (*Kehama*, p. 259) has the line: “The Amreeta-cup of immortality.”

90, sad land. India.

91, peerless maiden. The goddess of the United States, Columbia. See l. 102.

92ff., mountain-girded . . . summit. Obvious reference to the Appalachian and Rocky Mountains. Some of the mountain imagery is traceable, I think, to Southey’s Mount Meru, the source of the Ganges (*Kehama*, pp. 93-109).

94, storm drew nigh. American Revolution.

97, maid’s majestic eye. On the eyes of the goddess Independence and of George Washington in E.’s poem, “Independence,” ll. 43 and 47, see *Letters*, VI, 331.

101, Fate. Appears also in the poem “Improvement” (1820). See note on l. 142.

102, round Columbia’s brow. She appears as heroine also in E.’s “Lines on Washington” (1814), *Letters*, VI, 329. E. got a hint for the lightnings from the head of Indra in *Kehama*, p. 70.

103ff., illustrious in the elder time. Reference to the idyllic Vale of Cashmere, much lauded in early Indian poetry. See Broughton, *passim*, as well as Murray, Grant, and the introductory essay.

105, flowers celestial. The lotus. See l. 51 above, and *Kehama*, pp. 135, 342. See William Ward, *A View of the History, Literature, and Mythology of the Hindoos* (2 vols.; Serampore, 1818), I, 5ff.: Before Creation, Vishnu was sleeping on the waters of the deluge, and from his navel sprang the lotus. Out of it came Brahma, who in the form of Narayena, gradually created our world.

106, pillars which sustain the world. See Grant, ll. 247ff., and attendant note, in the introductory essay.

110, favourite child. I.e., India, in her early history.



111, Fair Science pondered. For India's golden age of learning and great teachers, see Grant, pp. 1-8.

117, cormorant sits. See notes on l. 18 *supra*. For the vultures and other birds of prey which attack the dead and dying devotees, see all accounts of the Juggernaut. Vultures and "winged plunderers" appear in *Kehama*, pp. 35 and 83.

125, maids of empire. Apparently E. drew from Germanic mythology for this figure. Cf. the Valkyries and Thomas Gray's "The Fatal Sisters." See *Journals*, I, pp. 32-33.

131, holy cherubim. See l. 76 and note on l. 42.

135, Eagle's food. Columbia, guardian angel of the U.S., kept and provided for the American eagle.

137ff., Freedom's conquering cause. War of the Revolution and the War of 1812.

140, Queen of the East. India. E. probably recalled Grant's epithet for Britain: "Queen of many Isles" (l. 589).

141, No Indra thunders. Indra was god of the elements and occasionally employed thunder. See Moor, *op. cit.*, pp. 259-272. Southey was E.'s principal source. Kehama gained control over Indra's realm and the elements, but in America, air, water, fire, etc., are free to all. See *Kehama*, pp. 13, 56, 65-68, 71-72, 74-75, 96, 105, 124ff., 223, 288-289. Ereenia says to Kailyal (*Kehama*, p. 63):

Come, plead thyself to Indra! words like thine  
May win their purpose, rouse his slumbering heart,  
And make him yet put forth his arm to wield  
The thunder, while the thunder is his own.

142, "man-almighty". This is Southey's principal title for his Rajah. See *Kehama*, pp. 18, 34, 50, 53, 72, 81, *et passim*. Other titles include "Almighty Tyrant," "King of the World," "Tyrant of the Earth," "Enemy of Heaven," "Earthly Almighty," and "Man-God." Cf. Aurungzebe in Grant's poem, ll. 20ff.

142, destiny. See note on "Fate" in l. 101. See *Kehama*, pp. 69, 133, 197-200, 214ff., 232ff., 246ff., 252ff., and 359-360.

144, Power whose law we love. Probably the Hebraic-Christian God and his Commandments.

144. Between ll. 144 and 145 in the MS. are two canceled lines, now illegible.



152, To rend the idol. E., like his contemporaries, had the Jugernaut especially in mind. See note on l. 25. See references to Mariataly's idol in *Kehama*, *passim*. See marriage to the idol in *Kehama*, pp. 351-353.

154, loud monsoon. Treated especially in Robertson, *An Historical Disquisition*.

155, woke the Italian shore. Reference to the conspiracies and insurrections of the Carboneria in Italy, organized in 1815 after the Allied Powers had restored the old totalitarianism. The Carboneria finally achieved the political and economic resurrection of Italy.

156, till Time shall be no more. The line appears (*ca.* Jan. 30, 1820) in E.'s MS. "The Wide World No. 1." See Henry Kirke White, "Time," ll. 726-727:

Beyond the stars, and all this passing scene,  
When change shall cease, and Time shall be no more.

This apocalyptic note appears also in Bishop Berkeley's poem, included in the introductory essay. See also *Journals*, I, 74, where he attempts to imitate the rhetoric of Chateaubriand: "The finger of God is pointing out your way. And when ages shall have elapsed and time is no more . . . Man shall come to the presence of Jehovah."

See the annual "Bibliography of New England" in  
the NEQ under the heading "Maritime".

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## APPENDIX A

# Notes on Massachusetts Orientalism

THOUGH beyond the scope of this book, the nonliterary Asiatic influences upon New England life referred to in the introductory essay are important enough to deserve brief bibliographical treatment. Boston fashions and the standards of living were deeply affected by the Indian trade, as may be seen in all the early newspapers. The *Boston Daily Advertiser*, for example, constantly speaks of the India Wharf and India Street. It features India imports on almost every page—sawns, bafts, sannas, gilla, the madras pattern, sooty rumal handkerchiefs, custers, fine Gourypore checks, gurrahs, Calcutta goatskins, chintz, mahmudis, Bengal ginghams, mogadore skins, sea-horse teeth and leopard hides.<sup>1</sup> Physicians recommend India rubber shoes. Citizens are encouraged to buy Bengal or Jessore indigo, India muslins, choppas, bandannas, and Calcutta twines. The newspapers of Boston, Salem, and Plymouth are therefore primary sources for the student of social history.

Shipping reports from the Orient were a daily influence, often firing the adolescent imagination as well as determining the course of American investments: "LONDON, Nov. 13.—The American ship *Bengal*, at Cowes, 95 days from the Straits of Sunda, reports that a British sloop of war had been attacked in those Straits by a fleet of Malay prows."<sup>2</sup> "Ship *Cordelia*, [Captain] Magee, arrived at Falmouth, England, 9th Nov., from Canton,

25 **BAILY (Bernard)** THE NEW ENGLAND MERCHANTS IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY, demy 8vo, 262 pp.,  
*2 half-tone plates and 2 line drawings* £1 18s

Soon after the beginning of the theocratic colonies, the merchants, as a rising group, began to challenge the domination of the Puritan fathers. Within a century, the merchants, powerful economically, politically and socially, were sitting in the legislatures, helping control the destiny of the land.



18 **HEILBRONNER (R. L.)** THE GREAT ECONOMISTS: their Lives and their Conceptions of the World. With two supplementary chapters by Paul Streeten, demy 8vo £1 8s

The modern industrial system, as the author says, was born in agony and the economic revolution which finally destroyed the medieval system was neither understood nor welcomed, much less planned. Out of the mêlée of the industrial revolution, the author has selected the lives of the great economists for the spectacles of generations."

for Rotterdam. Her owners have received from their agents in London the following [news]: The *Cordelia* left China 15th June. Ship *Ophelia*, of Boston, passed up the river as the *Cordelia* came down. Left at Canton ship *Gov. Endicott*, of Salem, waiting for new teas, expected to sail with the change of the monsoon—probably early in November.”<sup>3</sup> Early newspapers can contribute much information on India’s significance in American economics.

Boston entertained occasional widely traveled guests from the East. The newspapers tell us who they were and what they reported. “The Rev. Mr. Ward, Missionary from India, is on a visit to America, to obtain patronage for a College to instruct the natives of that country as religious teachers of their brethren. He will preach at the first Baptist Meeting-House on the afternoon of next Lord’s-day, when a collection will be made to assist his object.”<sup>4</sup>

The researcher should next turn to Samuel Eliot Morison’s *The Maritime History of Massachusetts, 1783–1860*,<sup>5</sup> and to his article, “The India Ventures of Fisher Ames, 1794–1804.”<sup>6</sup> For New England’s rich accumulation of logbooks, ledgers, diaries, and shipping reports, as well as for significant printed materials on the India trade, one should consult the bibliography in a recent Harvard doctoral dissertation.<sup>7</sup> The Archives of the Union of South Africa can offer information concerning American trade in all parts of the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans from the earliest times.<sup>8</sup> The resources, moreover, of the East-India Marine Society of Salem<sup>9</sup> and certain standard secondary reference works<sup>10</sup> should not be neglected.

Some attention ought eventually to be given to the oriental influence on the British-American stage. Boston’s Tremont Theatre had record attendances for plays like *The Cataract of the Ganges, or, The Rajah’s Daughter*, advertised as a “Grand Equestrian Melo Drama” in two acts, and featuring the Rajah of Gugesat and the Grand “Bramin of the Jahujah Tribe.” There were other plays on Eastern themes like *Timour the Tartar* and *El Hyder, or, Love and Bravery*.<sup>11</sup> As early as 1800 the Boston thea-

The "Advertisement" indicates that the English play is no mere translation of Lemierre.

tre featured the burning of a Hindu widow (the "Suttee") in David Humphrey's popular *Widow of Malabar*, taken from the French of Lemierre. One scene disclosed a procession of Brahmins conducting Etimora to the funeral pyre of her husband.<sup>12</sup>

1. See the Boston *Daily Advertiser* for Emerson's senior year at Harvard: Dec. 30, 1820, p. 4; Jan. 1, 1821, p. 1; Jan. 4, 1821, *passim*.

2. *Ibid.*, Jan. 3, 1821, p. 2 (slightly edited).

3. *Ibid.*, Jan. 2, 1821, p. 2 (slightly edited).

4. *Ibid.*, Dec. 28, 1820, p. 2.

5. Boston, 1941. Bibliography on pp. 399-410.

6. *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, n.s. XXXVII (1928), 14-23.

7. Bernard Bailyn, "The New England Merchants in the 17th Century" (April, 1953). The bibliographical references are also adequate for studies in the eighteenth century.

8. The Embassy, Room 817 Dupont Circle Bldg., Washington 6, D. C.

9. See *The East-India Marine Society of Salem* [Salem, Mass., 1831], and Walter Muir Whitehill, *The East India Marine Society and the Peabody Museum of Salem*, Salem, 1949.

10. See Ralph D. Paine, *The Ships and Sailors of Old Salem* (Boston, 1923); James Duncan Phillips, *Salem and the Indies* (Boston, 1947); also his *Salem in the Eighteenth Century* (Boston and New York, 1937); Charles S. Osgood and Henry Morrill Batchelder, *Historical Sketch of Salem (1626-1879)* (Salem, 1879), esp. pp. 141-145.

12. See Peter Oliver, "The Boston Theatre, 1800," *Publications of the Colonial Society of Mass.*, XXXIV (1943), 554-570, esp. 559-560.

Boston Daily Advertiser, Jan. 5, 1821, col. 25, 1828.



## APPENDIX B

# Oriental Themes and Climate in Harvard Commencement and Exhibition Parts (1800–1834)<sup>1</sup>

- 1800, July 16 "The Natural Advantages of Asia, Africa, Europe, and America."
- 1811, Apr. 30 "Character of Mahomet, considered as an Enthusiast, an Imposter, or an Union of Both."
- 1815, Aug. 30 "On the Power of the Oriental, Gothic, and Classical Superstition to affect the Imagination and Feelings."
- 1815, Aug. 30 "On Superstition and Scepticism."
- 1816, Aug. 28 "Whether the Prevalence of Despotism in Asia be occasioned principally by Physical Causes."
- 1817, Apr. 29 "On the Indian Astronomy."
- 1817, Oct. 28 "The Poetry of the Oriental Nations."
- 1818, Aug. 26 "On the Use of Heathen Mythology in Modern Poetry."
- 1818, Oct. 20 "Mahomet and Alcanor."
- 1819, Aug. 19 "The Genii of the Four Continents."
- 1819, Aug. 25 "On the Characteristicks of Man and Government, as found in the Savage, Pastoral, Agricultural, and Commercial State."
- 1821, Apr. 24 "Indian Superstition—A Poem."

- 1821, Aug. 29 "On the Relative Physical Advantages of the Eastern and Western Continents."
- 1821, Aug. 29 "On Popular Superstitions."
- 1822, Aug. 22 "The Institutions of the East Indians."
- 1823, Aug. 27 "On the Evils of Superstition and Scepticism."
- 1823, Aug. 27 "The Ruins of Thebes, Babylon, Persepolis, and Palmyra."
- 1824, Aug. 25 "Do Savage Nations possess a full Right to the Soil?"
- 1825, Aug. 31 "Ruins of the East—A Poem."
- 1826, Aug. 30 "The Polar Regions, South America, Central Africa, and India, as affording Objects of Curiosity and Interest."
- 1826, Aug. 30 "Prospects of Christianity in India."
- 1826, Oct. 17 "The Moral and Intellectual Qualities of Dr. Johnson, Burke, and Sir William Jones."
- 1827, July 16 "Ancient Ethical Systems as connected with Modern Moral Researches."
- 1829, Oct. 20 "The Jewish, Christian, and Mahometan Religions under the Allegory of the Three Rings" (from Lessing's *Nathan*).
- 1830, Aug. 25 "The Roman Ceremonies, the System of the Druids, the Religion of the Hindoos, and the Superstition of the American Indians."
- 1832, Aug. 29 "Influence of Superstition on Science and Literature."
- 1834, Aug. 27 "Superstition."
- 
- 1800, July 16 "Whether Difference of Complexion arises from Difference of Climate?"
- 1806, Aug. 27 "Influence of Climate and Government on Letters."
- 1809, Aug. 30 "Climate—A Poem."
- 1810, Aug. 29 "On the Influence of the Frigid, Torrid, and Temperate Zones on the Character of the Inhabitants."

Harvard College Library owned:

William Falconer:

Remarks on the Influence of Climate, Situation,  
Nature of Country, Population, Nature of Food,  
and Way of Life, on the Disposition and Temper,  
Manners and Behavior, Intellects, Laws and Cus-  
toms, Form of Government, and Religion, of  
Mankind,  
London, 1781.



- 1821, Aug. 29 "On the Relative Physical Advantages of the Eastern and Western Continents."
- 1821, Aug. 29 "On Popular Superstitions."
- 1822, Aug. 22 "The Institutions of the East Indians."
- 1823, Aug. 27 "On the Evils of Superstition and Scepticism."
- 1823, Aug. 27 "The Ruins of Thebes, Babylon, Persepolis, and Palmyra."
- 1824, Aug. 25 "Do Savage Nations possess a full Right to the Soil?"
- 1825, Aug. 31 "Ruins of the East—A Poem."
- 1826, Aug. 30 "The Polar Regions, South America, Central Africa, and India, as affording Objects of Curiosity and Interest."
- 1826, Aug. 30 "Prospects of Christianity in India."
- 1826, Oct. 17 "The Moral and Intellectual Qualities of Dr. Johnson, Burke, and Sir William Jones."
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- 1829, Oct. 20 "The Jewish, Christian, and Mahometan Religions under the Allegory of the Three Rings" (from Lessing's *Nathan*).
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- 1800, July 16 "Whether Difference of Complexion arises from Difference of Climate?"
- 1806, Aug. 27 "Influence of Climate and Government on Letters."
- 1809, Aug. 30 "Climate—A Poem."
- 1810, Aug. 29 "On the Influence of the Frigid, Torrid, and Temperate Zones on the Character of the Inhabitants."

- 1815, Aug. 30 "On the Operation of Climate on the Moral, Intellectual, and Military Character."
- 1817, Apr. 29 "On the Influence of the Climate upon Moral and Intellectual Character."
- 1819, Aug. 19 "On the Influence of the Torrid, Temperate, and Frigid Zones on the Character of the Inhabitants."
- 1820, Apr. 25 "Influence of Climate in Producing the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species."
- 1825, Oct. 25 "The Influence of Climate on Intellect, Morals, and Language."

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1. Speculation on climate in this period is traceable chiefly to Montesquieu's *The Spirit of Laws* (1st American from 5th London ed., 2 vols.; Worcester, [Mass.], 1802). See Bk. xiv, "Of Laws as Relative to the Nature of the Climate"; Bk. xv, "In what Manner the Laws of Civil Slavery are Relative to the Nature of the Climate"; Bk. xvi, "How the Laws of Domestic Slavery have a Relation to the Nature of the Climate"; Bk. xvii, "How the Laws of Political Servitude have a Relation to the Nature of the Climate"; Bk. xxiv, "Of Laws as Relative to Religion." See Vol. I, pp. 309-312, "Of the climate of Asia." See also Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, trans. T. Churchill (London, 1800), pp. 163-224. Herder also discussed the Hindus, especially in his section on "Hindostan," pp. 305-310, *et passim*.

For Emerson's earliest references to climate, see *Journal & Notebooks*, I. 56. 56. 174

## APPENDIX C

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1. Based upon a forthcoming bibliography to be entitled "Emerson's Reading in Periodicals," upon the published and unpublished journals, upon internal evidence, upon the Harvard curriculum for the junior and senior years and upon three published reading records: Kenneth W. Cameron, *Emerson's Early Reading List (1819–1824)*, (New York, 1951); *Ralph Waldo Emerson's Reading* (Raleigh, N.C., 1941); "Books Borrowed from the Boston Library Society" in *Emerson the Essayist* (2 vols.; Raleigh, N.C., 1945), II, 149-186.

2. Although the charging books of the Harvard College Library are missing for Emerson's last three undergraduate years, evidence, I think, points to his having regularly exploited the resources of available encyclopedias. He used three volumes of Dobson's—i.e., the first American edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (18 vols.; Phila., 1798)—during his freshman year, and Prof. F. Y. St. Clair believes he consulted it or another for creative purposes during the year following his graduation. (See "Emerson among the Siphars," *American Literature*, XIX (1947), 73-77.) The following articles were within reach in Dobson's publication: (a) "India" (IX, 174-213); (b) "Philosophy" (XIV, 573-600), which subdivided "Indian Philosophy" as follows: "Ingrafted on religion—Admits not the separate existence of matter—Teaches the metempsychosis—Physics of the Bramins—Their Astronomy—Strange notions of the Universe—Ethics of the Hindoos;" (c) "Hindoos, or Gentoos" (VIII, 512-523); "Hindostan" (VIII, 523-541); "Mythology" (XII, 599-609), with these subdivisions: "Hindoo Mythology—Hindoo traditions relating to the Deluge—The world subject to various dissolutions and resuscitations—Birth of the god Fo or Foe—The Incarnations of Vishnou."



# Index

## A NOTE CONCERNING THE INDEX

I HAVE prepared the following pages principally for scholars who now and later will welcome every possible aid in tracing from Emerson's childhood throughout his maturity the principal images and motifs of his verse and prose. For the researcher in the period covered by the present study, few helps are now available apart from the index of Professor Rusk's edition of the *Letters* and my own bibliographies of Emerson's early reading. As one who is actively engaged in evaluating the years of Emerson's late adolescence and early adulthood and who is about to publish two studies in this field—*Emerson's Workshop* and *Emerson's Apprenticeship*—I have felt the need for scholarly thoroughness in every Emerson project undertaken. As originally planned, however, the present work was intended for a nontechnical reading public. Except for footnotes and this index it still is so intended. But as the importance of Mr. Cooley's manuscript for specialists as well as for collectors of good books became increasingly apparent to us, our horizon widened and our sympathies grew warm. The members of the Publication Committee of the Friends of the Dartmouth Library have not always shared my bibliographical views, and a few have had some misgivings about both the footnotes and the length of the present index in such a book as this, but they have generously permitted me to follow what has seemed an ambivalent course, and they have loyally trusted my judgment regarding the possible long-range significance, for scholarship, of their first little volume.

K. W. C.



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